BIG COMICS SPECIAL

吉像救世軍伝説

第十集

Kyousei Gunden Ikkouroku Dai Juu Kan

星野之宣

Yukinobu Hoshino Presents

BIG COMICS SPECIAL

THE CASE RECORDS OF PROFESSOR MUNAKATA

宗像教授異考録

Munakata Kyoujin Ikouroku

Collection 10

第十集

星野之宣

Yukinobu Hoshino Presents

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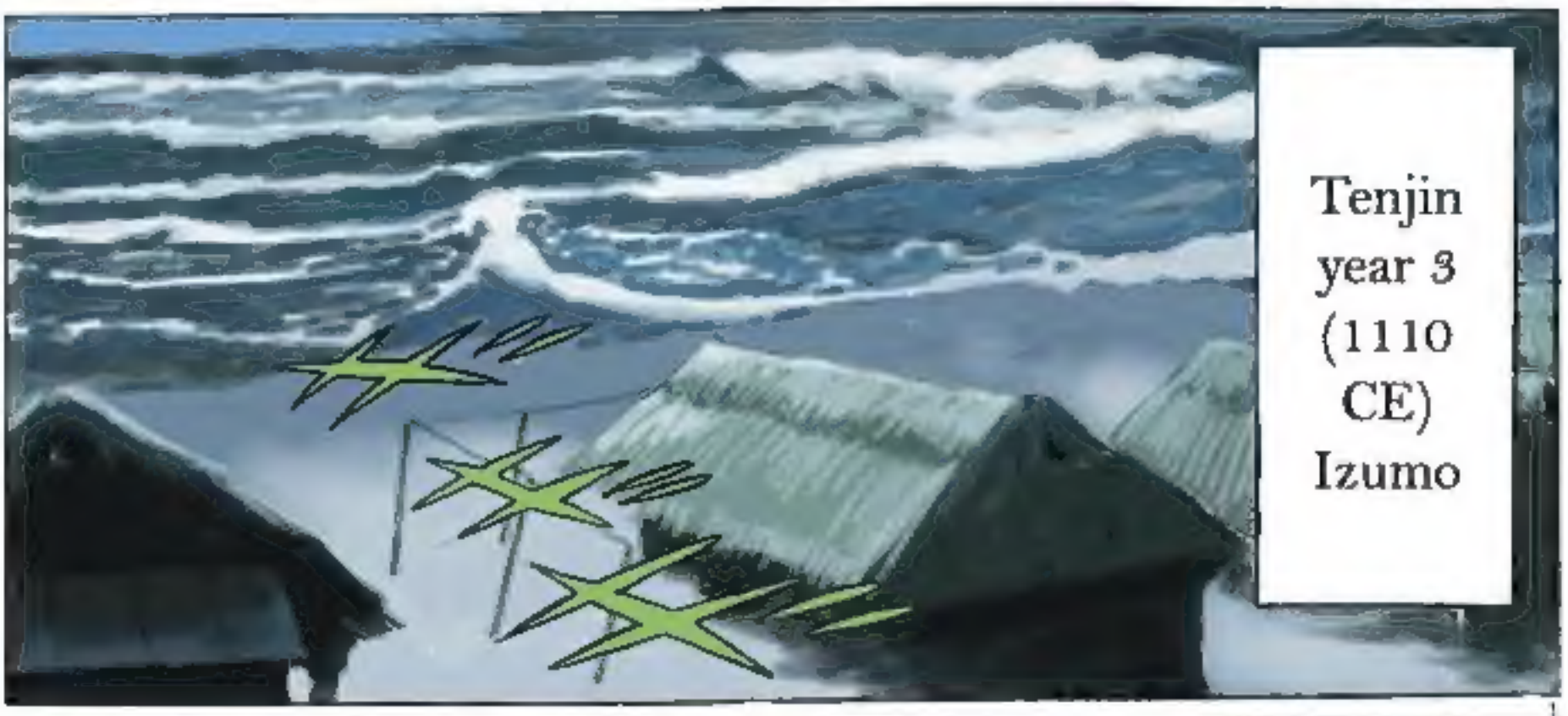


CHAPTER 29: THE DRIFTING GREAT TREES

In this year, there was a bizarre record of well over 100 trees drifting ashore on the beach of Inasa, on the coast of Izumo.

One that drifted ashore in the neighboring province of Inaba was stunningly massive, measured at 45 meters long, and 4-5 meters in diameter.

At the time, it is believed that there was an Ancient Izumo Grand Shrine that stood 48 meters tall, twice the height of the modern Izumo Grand Shrine.

But according to the records, this shrine collapsed for an unknown reason in the previous year, of 1109.

Its existence was recently supported by the excavation of the roots of pillars three meters in diameter from the grounds of Izumo Grand Shrine.

The former governor of Izumo, Fujiwara-no-Ieyasu, was appointed with the reconstruction of the shrine.

The difficulty was finding the pillars that could support a 48-meter tall structure.

No matter how he tied them together, or extended them, he could not find the trees he needed within the province.

Even if there were such trees deep within the mountains, it would require colossal amounts of labor and cost to transport them.

This was recorded in Ieyasu's diary as the "Construction of the Gathering Trees".

The construction of Izumo Grand Shrine began with the "Gathering Trees", which refer to the drifted lumber.

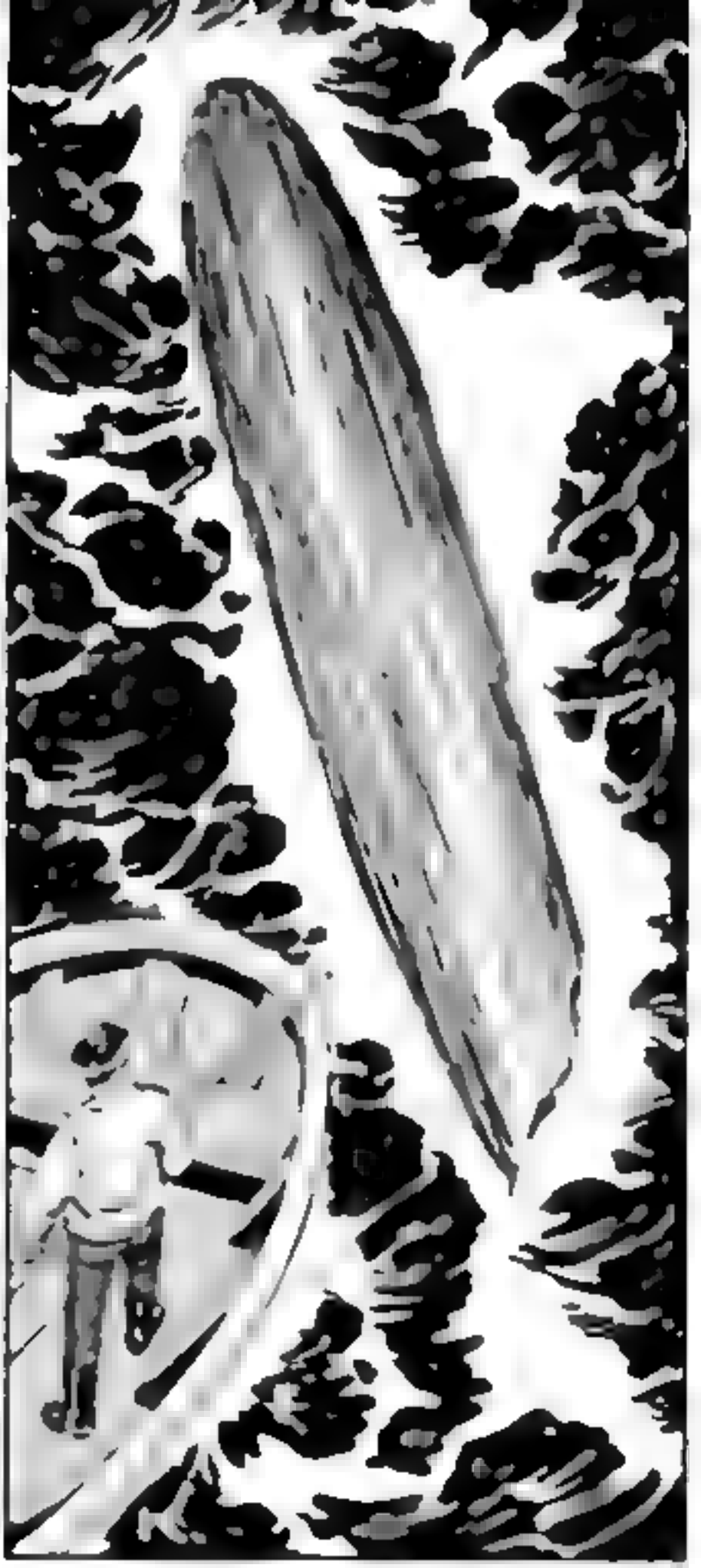
And so, as if by divine intervention, a hundred giant trees drifted ashore.

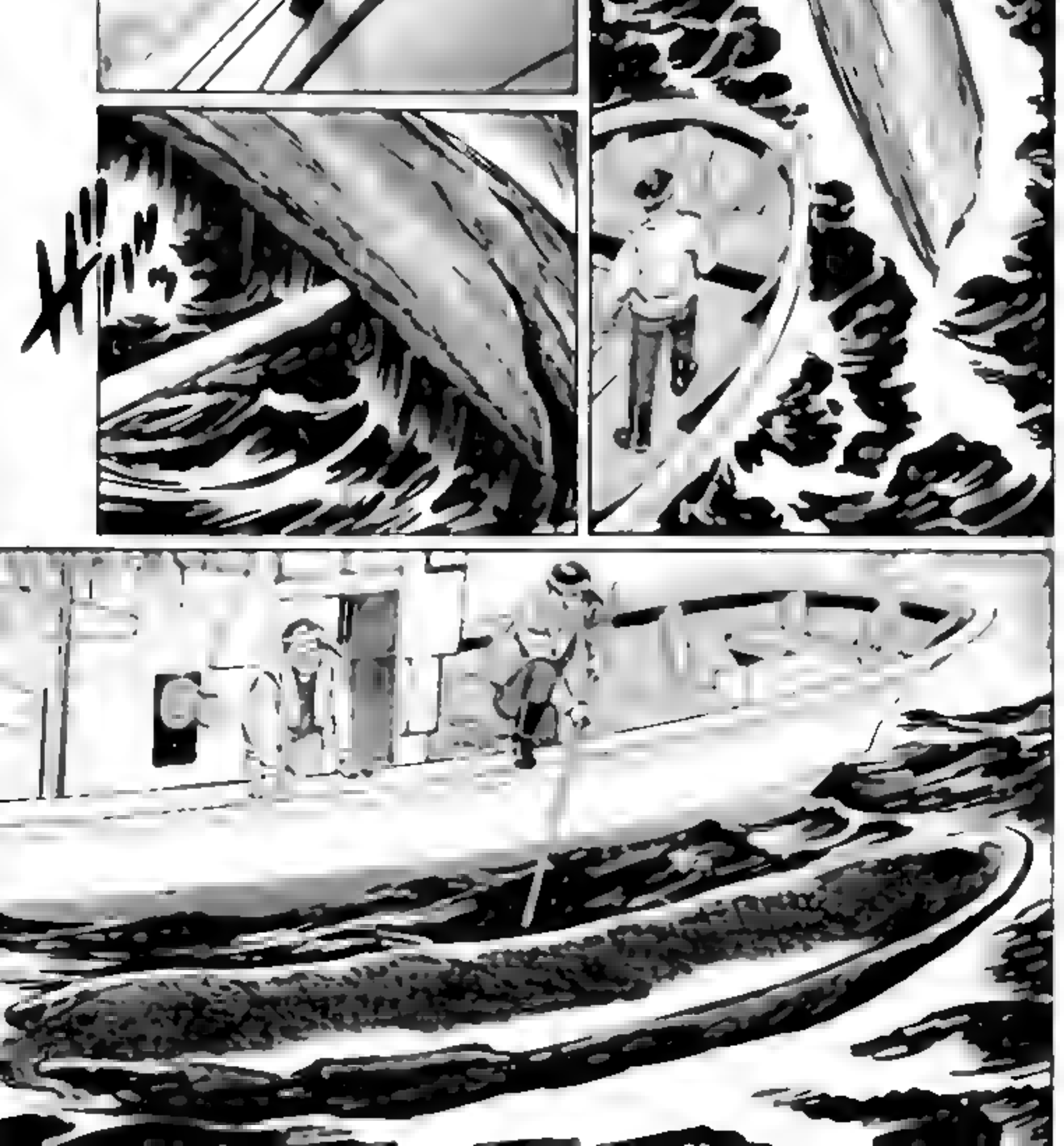
The shrine's records say that the reconstruction was finished in Eikyu year 3 (1115).

The tradition of the "Construction of the Gathering Trees" was introduced in the Edo-period traveler's journal, the "Kaikitsudan", and it is believed to be historical fact.

It would be possible for massive quantities of lumber to drift ashore from wrecked cargo ships, but it would have been inexplicable 900 years ago.

Why, and from where, did these 100 giant trees drift ashore from, as if by divine intervention...?





Munakata speaking...

A special article reflecting on the "Niigata Prefecture Chuetsu Offshore Earthquake" of last year...

The Echigo Morning News... Umm...

Ah, yes, that... Give me a second.

And you need a comment from me? About what?

I'm sure I have a copy somewhere in here...

This is it!

BYPRODUCT OF THE CHUETSU OFFSHORE EARTHQUAKE

ANCIENT TREES DISCOVERED OFFSHORE OF IZUMOZAKI

The Chuetsu Offshore Earthquake, which struck Nugata Prefecture on July 16th, 2007, caused major damage to the city and nuclear power plants, but an odd phenomenon occurred as a result of it.

Vast quantities of "ancient trees" suddenly surfaced in the ocean off of "Izumozaki" in Niigata Prefecture, near the epicenter.

It was believed that they had been buried in the sediment at the ocean floor for a long time, but were released due to the liquefaction caused by the earthquake

Over 250 tons of wood were recovered, and analysis concluded that they were trees from the Jomon period, 3000-6500 years old.

It would be one thing if the Jomon people left behind some kind of legend about this, but this Falls more in the field of the natural sciences than Folkloristics.

But there's really nothing to comment on.

I see. Well, it's not like there's nothing romantic about ancient trees From the Jomon period...

I'd like you to hear it, just For your reference.

The Fact is, people have made a lot of hypotheses about what First buried the trees under the seabed.

Y...Yes, but isn't there some way you can help ...?

IS THERE REALLY SUCH A THEORY ...!?

Yes, but I'm telling you, you should be telling this to a specialist... Yes...

Honestly, Uncle! Why'd you have to make another mess?

Do you have any plans for another research trip?

It's almost spring-time...

The trees that appeared offshore of Izumozaki in Niigata, thousands of years old...

might, strangely enough, be a clue to explaining a 900-year-old tradition of Izumo!

Shimane Prefecture

East Inbe Town,
Matsue City: Imibe Shrine

SIGN.
IMIBE
SHRINE

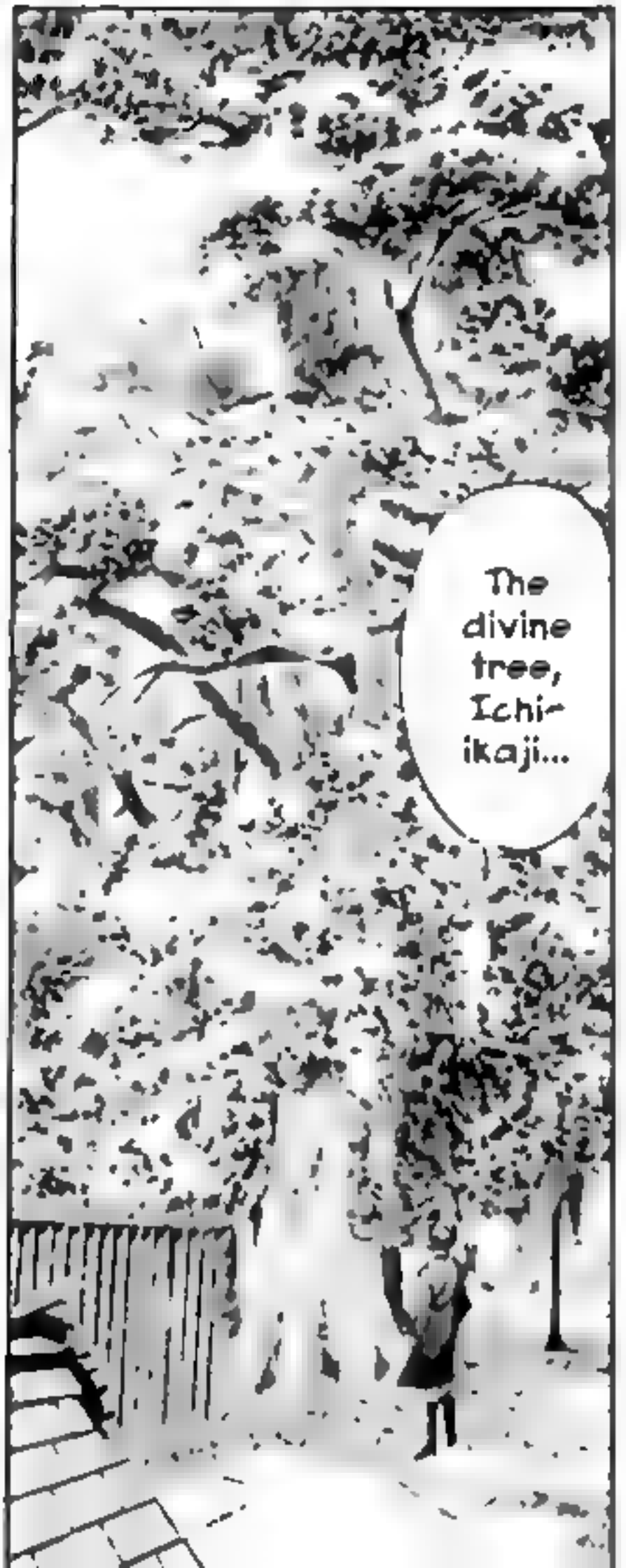
Ame-no-Futodama, ancestral god of the Inbe...

Ancestral spirits of the Izumo Tamazukuri Inbe Clan, who created the Evil-Crushing Jewel...

.....
Give your protection over my body, and protection over my life.

How I used to play around here when I was a little girl...

.....


The divine tree, Ichi-ikaji...

Did 100 giant trees really drift ashore, and if so, from where, and how?
the "Construction of the Gathering Trees" in the back of

All of those mysteries might be solved!
And more-over...
Why did the ancient shrine collapse before its recon-struction~
The worship hall is pretty big, but the main hall is like a multi-story building! Was it really twice as big in ancient times?
Oh....?

Imibe... I can never get away from you. I seem to run into you anywhere I go in Japan.

!

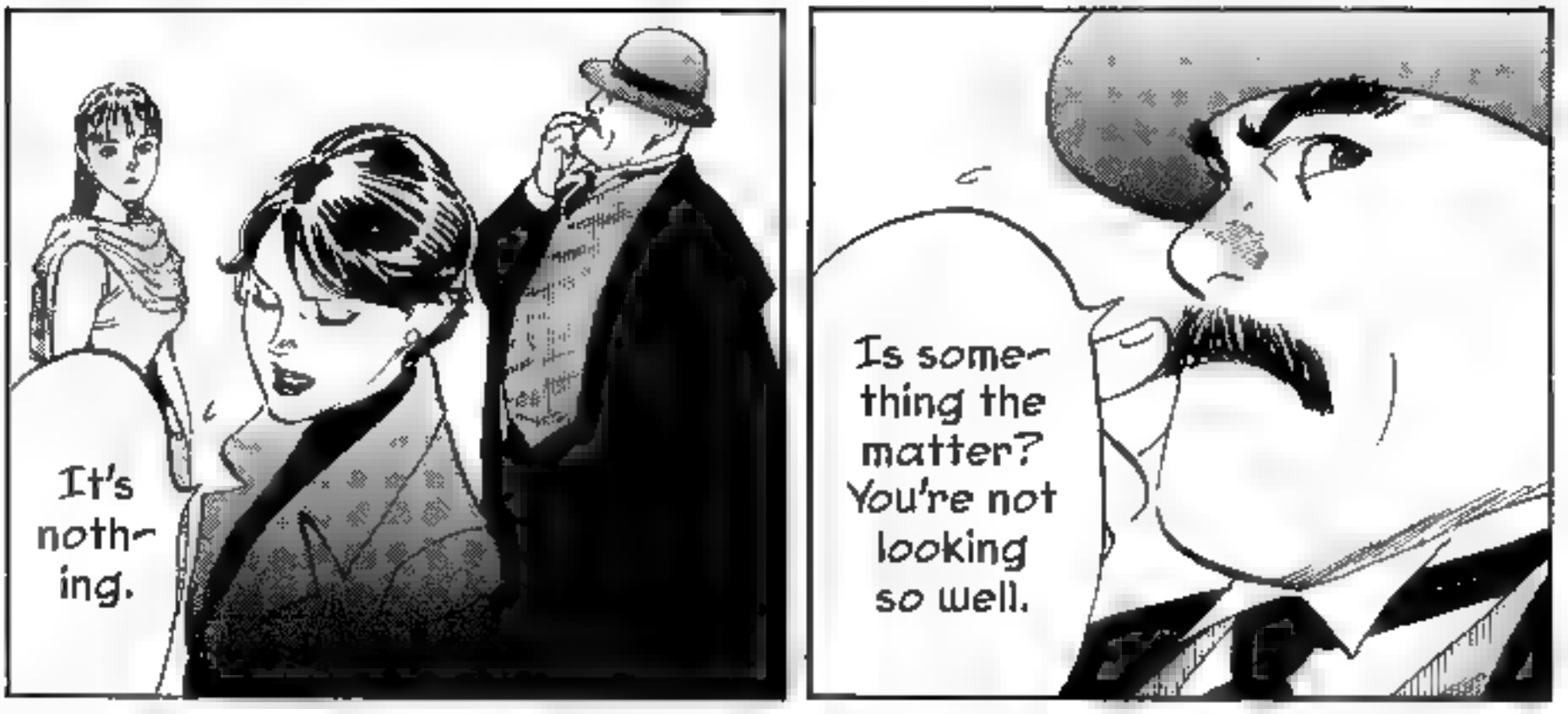
Hello, Ms. Kana! Are you here for work?

Taki, was it?

I know ...

.....

Izumo's my hometown. I came back for a visit, and thought I'd pay homage to the Grand Shrine...


It's noth-ing.
Is some-thing the matter? You're not looking so well.
By the way, I was watching the local news, and saw that a small boat just drifted ashore.
Good-bye, then...
Wait! What are you talking about?
A boat?

A fishing boat discovered it off the shore of Izumo.

It's made out of lauan wood, so it may have drifted here from the Philippines.

A lot of things come drifting up here from the south, along the Tsushima Current.

That far away?

Philippines?

There are a number of ancient boats stored at Miho Shrine, famous for the Morotabune Ritual...

And among them, there happens to be a Filipino boat that drifted ashore to Izumo.

HAH

About 4,200 years ago

during the Middle Jomon period,

in what is now the Niigata region...

ゴゴゴゴ

It is believed that Mt. Myogo (2454m), in Western Nugata, erupted at around this time.

This eruption caused a pyroclastic flow, and the heat and the blast blew away everything in the area.

It turned into a massive debris flow, washing away the ash, the rocks, and the trees.

After the fire came the water

KII

KII

As it flowed from the highlands to the lowlands, the debris flow swallowed up the broad-leaf trees that grew near the water, pushing them out to the ocean.

The trees then would have drifted off somewhere, carried by the ocean current...

This is not yet a perfect explanation, but this is believed to be the history of the vast quantities of ancient trees that came afloat offshore Izumozaki, in the 2007 Nugata Prefecture Chuetsu Offshore Earthquake.

The trees that landed on the coast were beaten by the waves, colliding with each other, and gradually wearing down rounder and rounder.

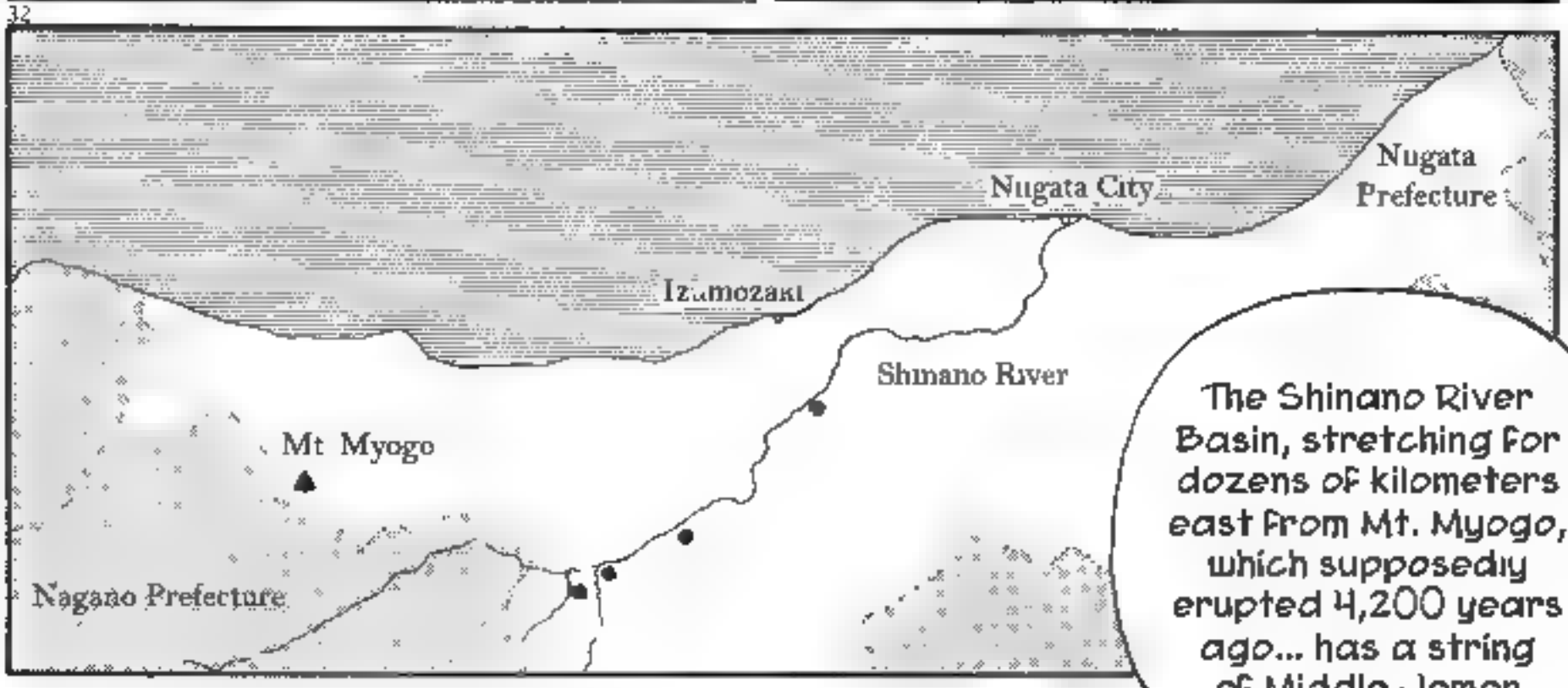
Before long, they absorbed moisture and sank, and were buried under the sediment of the ocean floor for thousands of years

But whatever the natural phenomenon might have been, I figured it was outside the field of folkloristics, since the Jomon people would have left no records of it.

I certainly never thought they could have been caused by a volcano.

Izumo Grand Shrine, Shimane Prefecture

But there were records.



The Shinano River Basin, stretching for dozens of kilometers east from Mt. Myogo, which supposedly erupted 4,200 years ago... has a string of Middle Jomon ruins.

I've always thought that this symbolized a volcanic eruption!

One kind of artifact that they've unearthed from many of these, including Umataka Ruins, is the "Flame Pottery"... A magnificent piece of pottery said to be around 4,500 years old.

ドドド

Perhaps, in the eyes of the Jomon, it was the Fury of the gods!

ゴゴゴ

ゴゴゴ

The Jomon must have witnessed the eruption of Mt. Myogo, which carried those trees away over four thousand years ago... and expressed that powerful image through their pottery.

D...DOES THAT MEAN THERE WAS A SIMILAR ERUPTION 900 YEARS AGO...!?

If we follow this volcanic eruption theory, we can explain the phenomenon of giant trees from the mountains flowing into the ocean en masse!

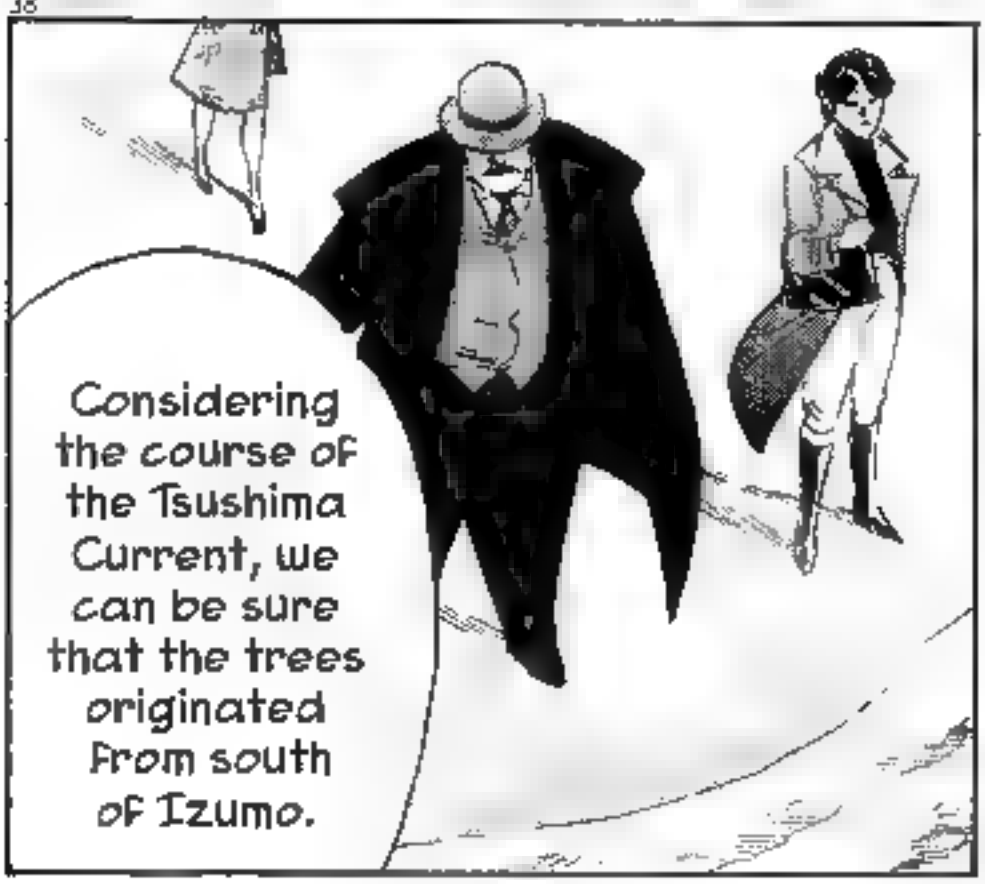
And if my intuition serves me right, this also explains the "Construction of the Gathering Trees" in 1100!

The Construction of the Gathering Trees... That's the tradition that Izumo Grand Shrine was rebuilt with the lumber of 100 trees that drifted ashore on the beach of Inasa...

Inasa Beach

.....

Here, on this shore...


Considering the course of the Tsushima Current, we can be sure that the trees originated from south of Izumo.

And even if there were a volcanic eruption within the country in 1110, there would be records of it. But such records do not exist.

We may as well consider that there were hardly any trees over 40 meters tall in Japan at the time...

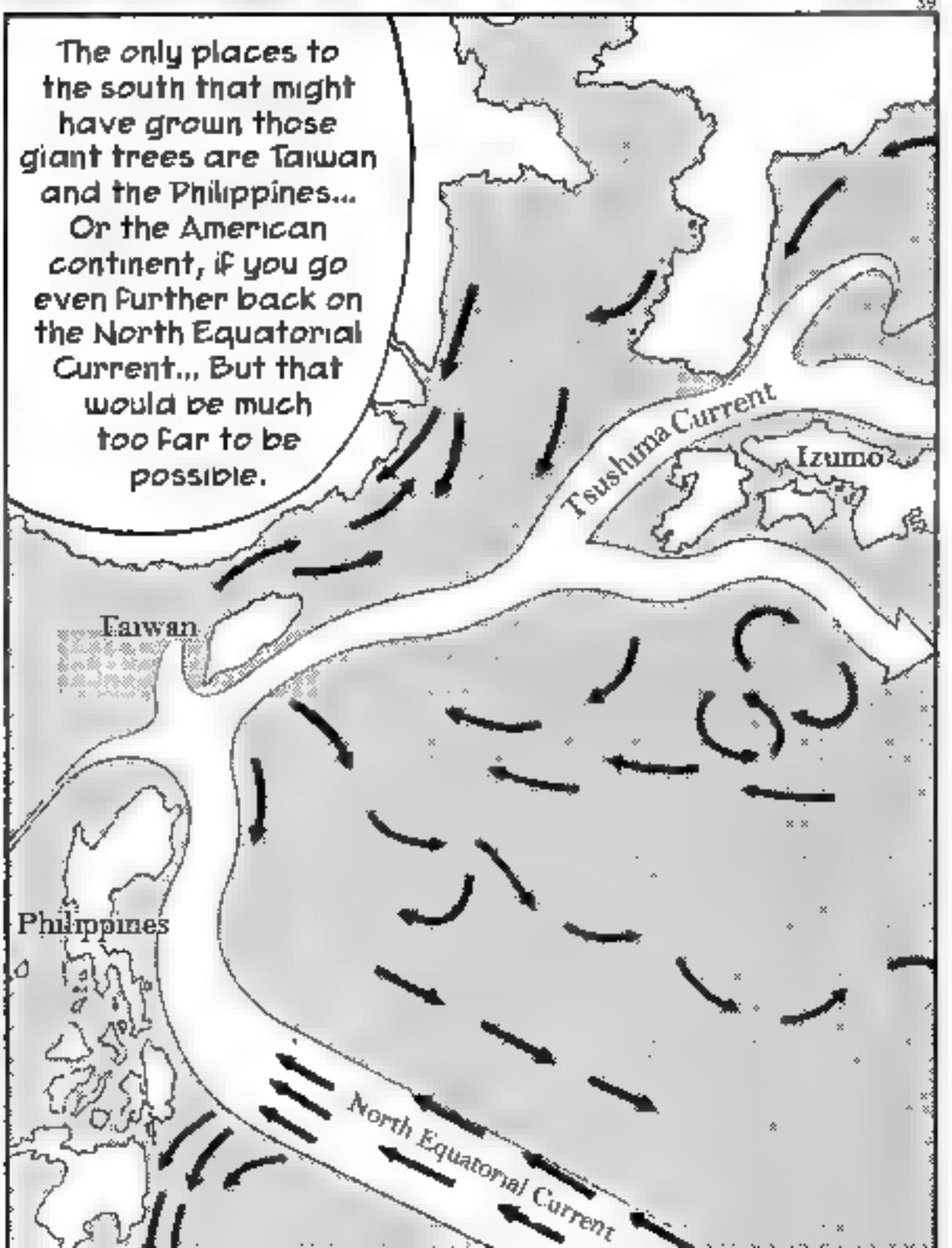
Right.

Just like that dugout ...

So they must have drifted from a country to the south of Japan.

So are there any records of a volcanic eruption in Taiwan or the Philip-pines...!?

The only places to the south that might have grown those giant trees are Taiwan and the Philippines... Or the American continent, if you go even further back on the North Equatorial Current... But that would be much too far to be possible.



But that means ...

Then again, this was 900 years ago. If I studied the local area, I might find sayings about it, but I don't think I'd find any records with clear dates.

I looked into it, but found no such records.

So if we can at least find a factual eruption, even without specifying the location, this theory could hold water.

If the drifting trees is factual, then the eruption that would cause it would have to be factual, as well.

Excuse me... You said you're a hot spring critic as well as a historian, right?

Y... Yes.

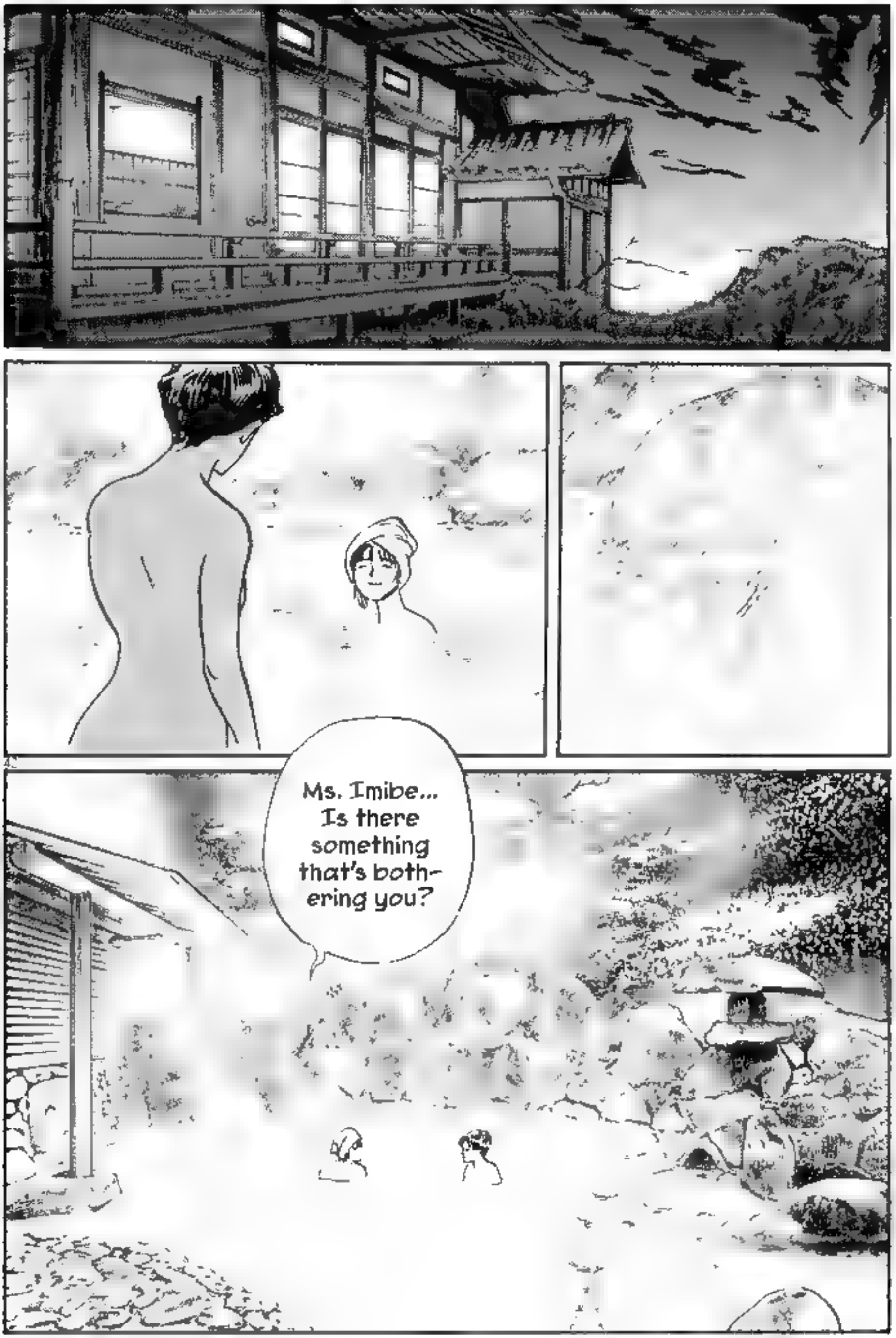
.....

If you like, you could join us...
Oh, I know of a good one...

We didn't reserve any lodging before we came, so I was hoping if you could let us know of any good hot springs in the area...

Uncle asked me to invite you...
Join you?

HM HM HM HM


Ms. Imibe... Is there something that's bothering you?

You're right... I wouldn't have come here un-grudgingly if I was my usual self, that's for sure...
You looked really melan-choly when I saw you from behind... I think even my uncle would've noticed.
I might be dying.

I'm afraid of finding out the results of the surgery...

I have ovarian cancer, and I'm going in for surgery when I go back to Tokyo.

Depending on the results of surgery, I might be in for a long battle with cancer. I may never be able to have children, and I may even die.

I touched the divine tree of Inbe Shrine, to take a portion of its life-force.

[illegible] are an ancient priesthood clan, so I came here to pray to my guardian deities of Izumo for help.

Don't tell anybody about this, Taki. I don't want this to be spread.

And Munakata's tree-ish enough For me... Hehehe...

But that might not have been enough For me. I still wanted someone else to rely on.

O... Okay!

Let's keep this just between us girls, okay?

45

.....

Is something the matter, Taki?

Hic... Hic...

Ahh hhh... kkkc hhh...

I see. That must be hard...

I... I'm sorry, I'm sorry... Ms. Imibe ...

.....

I guess I ended up confessing, after all...

Your condition is all the more reason you need to rest here.

Now, just a minute.

温泉

I apologize for darkening the mood. I'll be leaving now.

Okuninushi is generally referred to as "Lord Daikoku", and he was also the god of physicians, who healed the White Hare of Inaba, whose pelt had been flayed off

Needless to say, the principal deity of Izumo Grand Shrine is "Okuninushi"... One theory suggests that the Munakata Clan of the seafolk were his descendants...

I'm afraid the only thing I can do for you is show you my annual lucky performance.

47

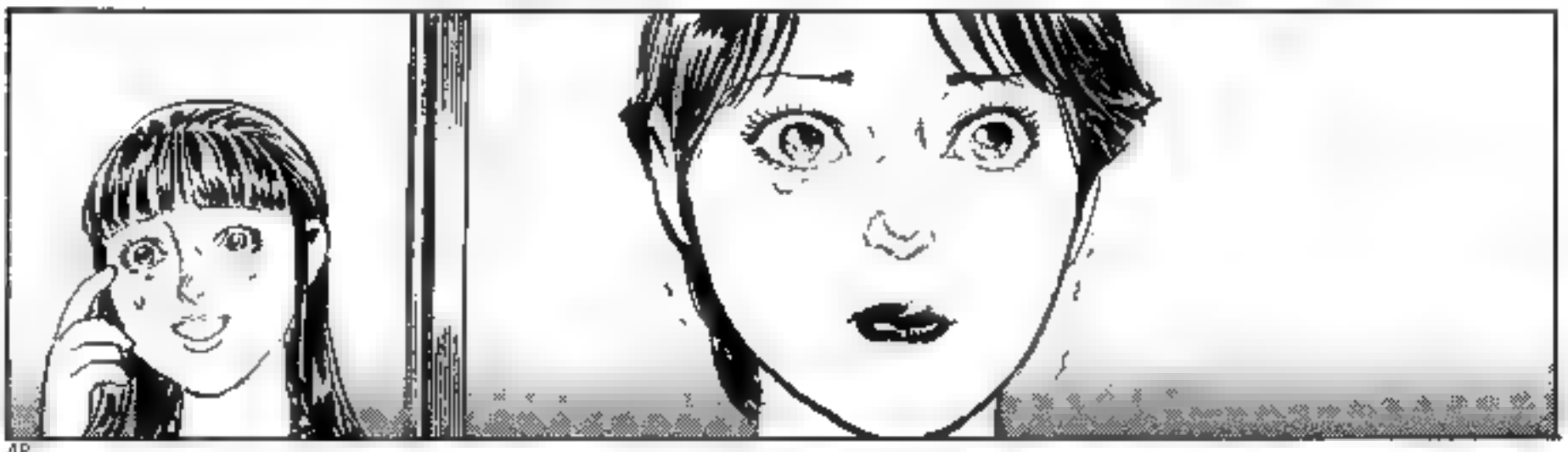
AND THIS IS THE WHITE HARE OF INABA ...

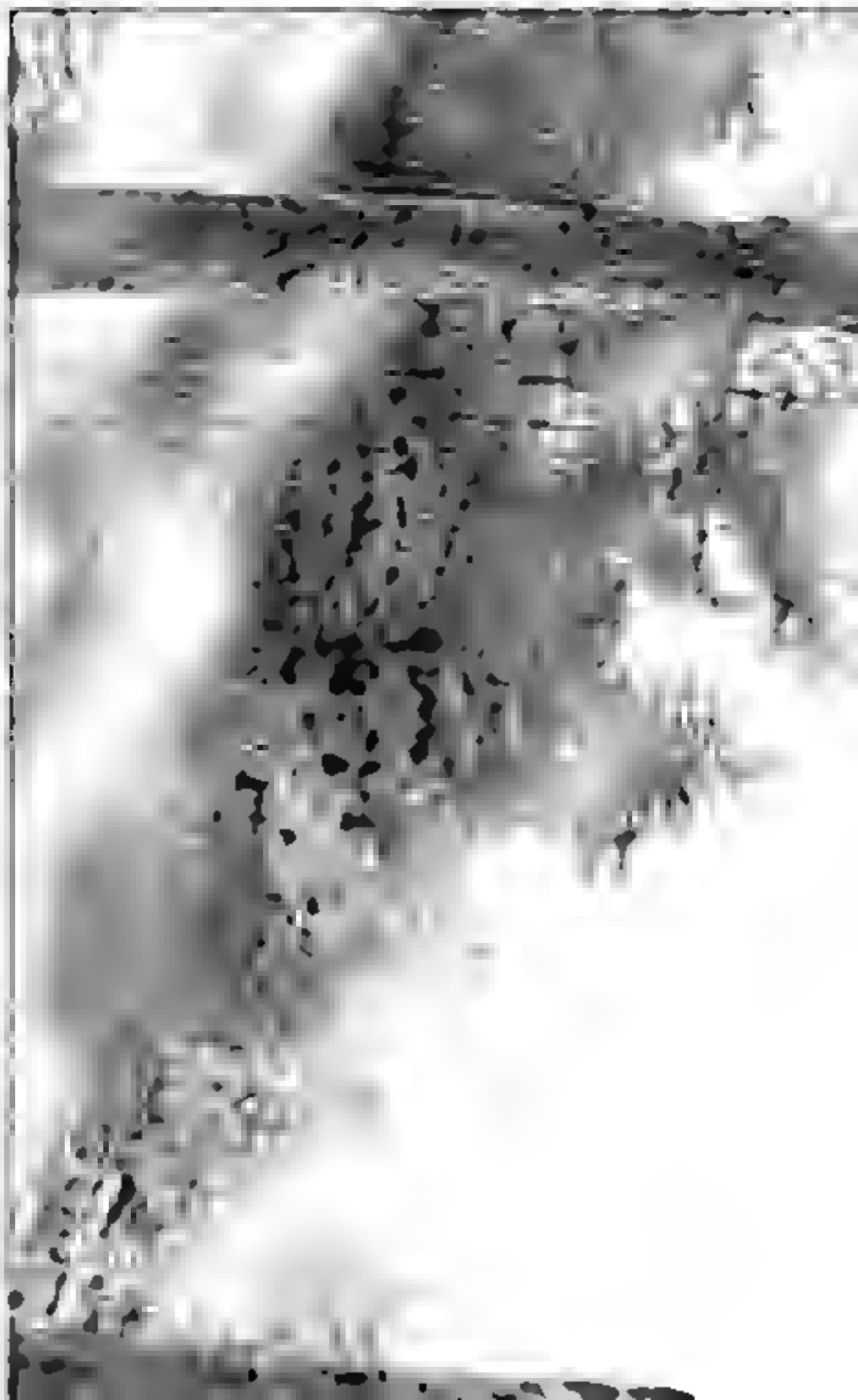
HERE COMES LORD DAIKOKU, WALKING ALONG,

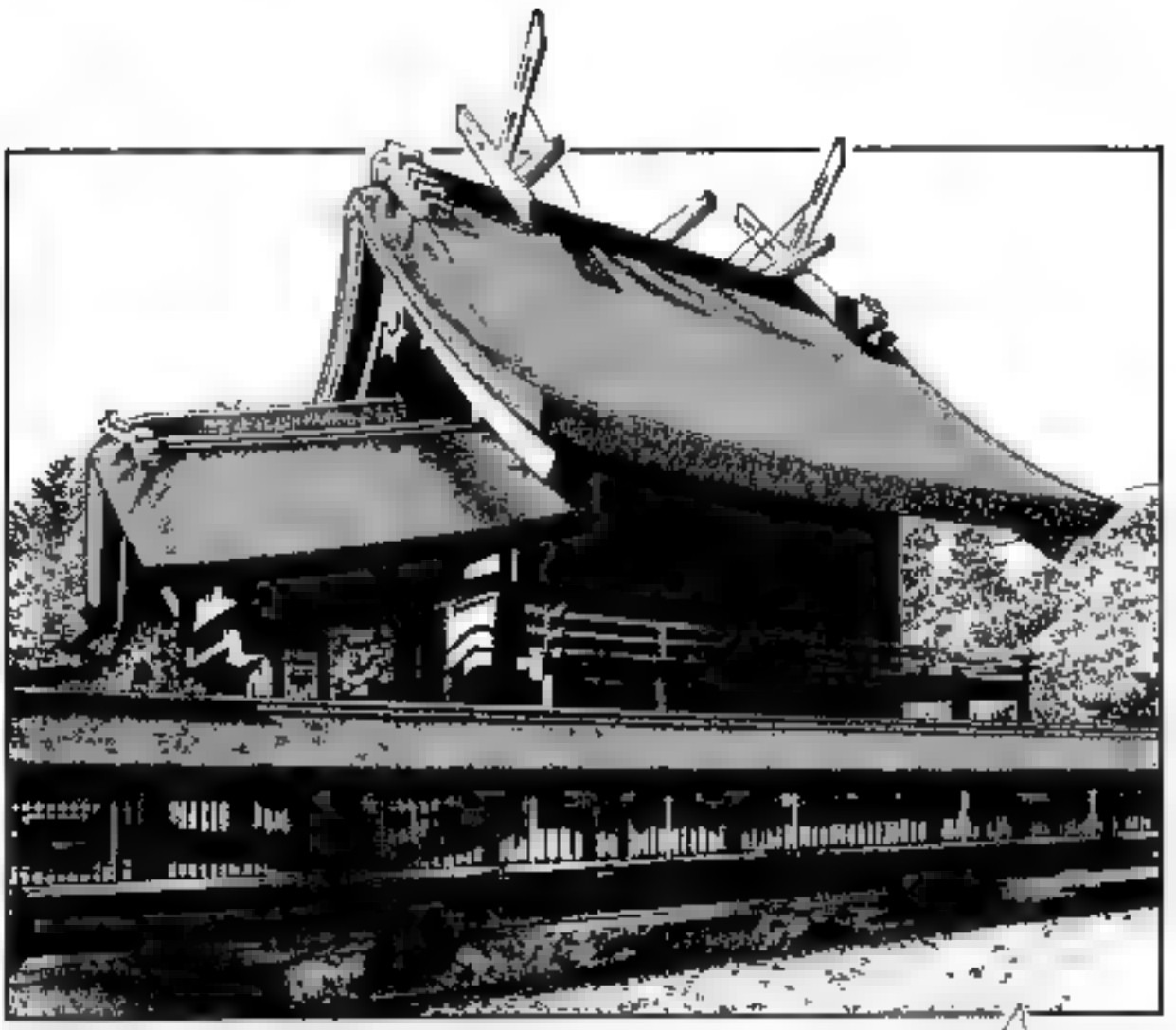
WITH HIS BIG SACK OVER HIS SHOULDER!

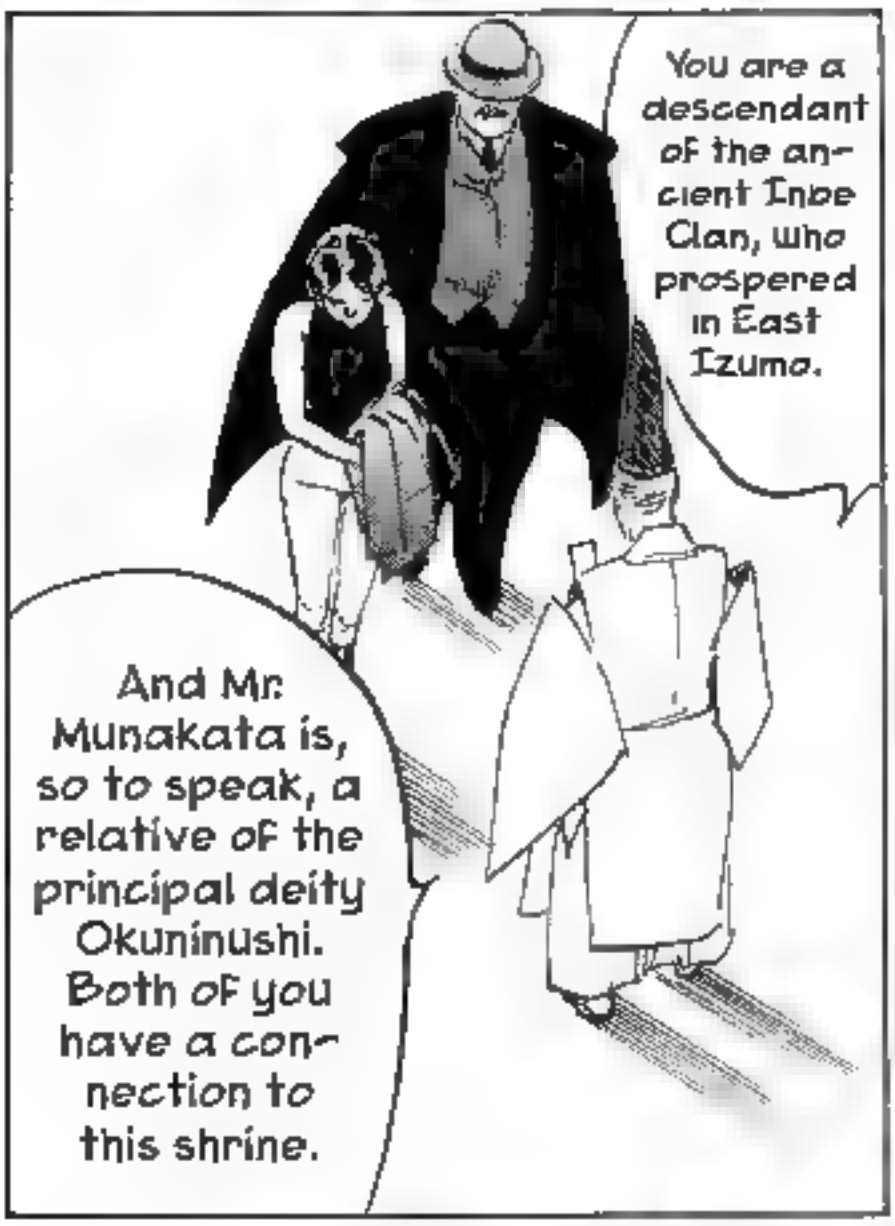
49

I feel like I've sung this before ...
NAKED AND RED, WITH ITS PELT TORN OFF!








You are a descendant of the ancient Inbe Clan, who prospered in East Izumo.
And Mr. Munakata is, so to speak, a relative of the principal deity Okuninushi. Both of you have a connection to this shrine.

I only went to the worship hall yesterday. Never thought I'd be able to pay my respects in the main hall...

51

No, it wasn't me.
Did you make a special request for this?

Oh?

We heard of your condition from Taki. The most we can offer you is to exorcise your spirit of disease.

.....

These are my sisters, Itsuki and Tagiri. I called them last night, and they came up here from Fukuoka.

The Kojiki says that Okuninushi, also known as Onamuchi, was persecuted by his brothers and killed twice, but came back to life with the help of women.

The mother goddess sent two seashell goddesses that heeded her laments, who used the powder and juice of the clams to treat him, and restore him to life.

When he was made to catch a red-hot burning stone, disguised as a red boar, and burned to death...

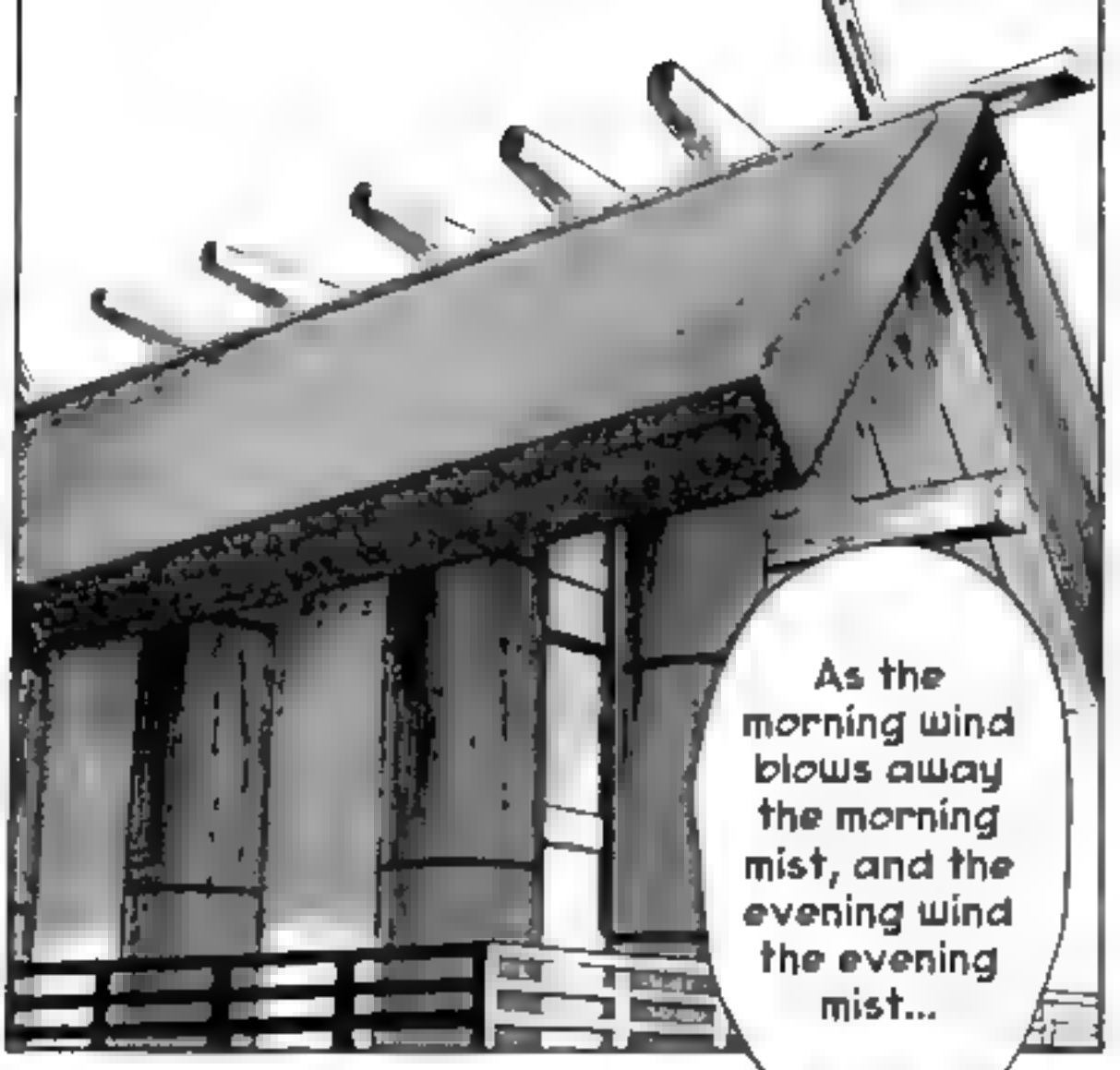
So I consider these three girls to be like my guardian deities. They can be quite reliable.

Okuninushi later took Takirihime, goddess of the seafolk of the Munakata Clan, as his wife. He has a strong connection to the sea.

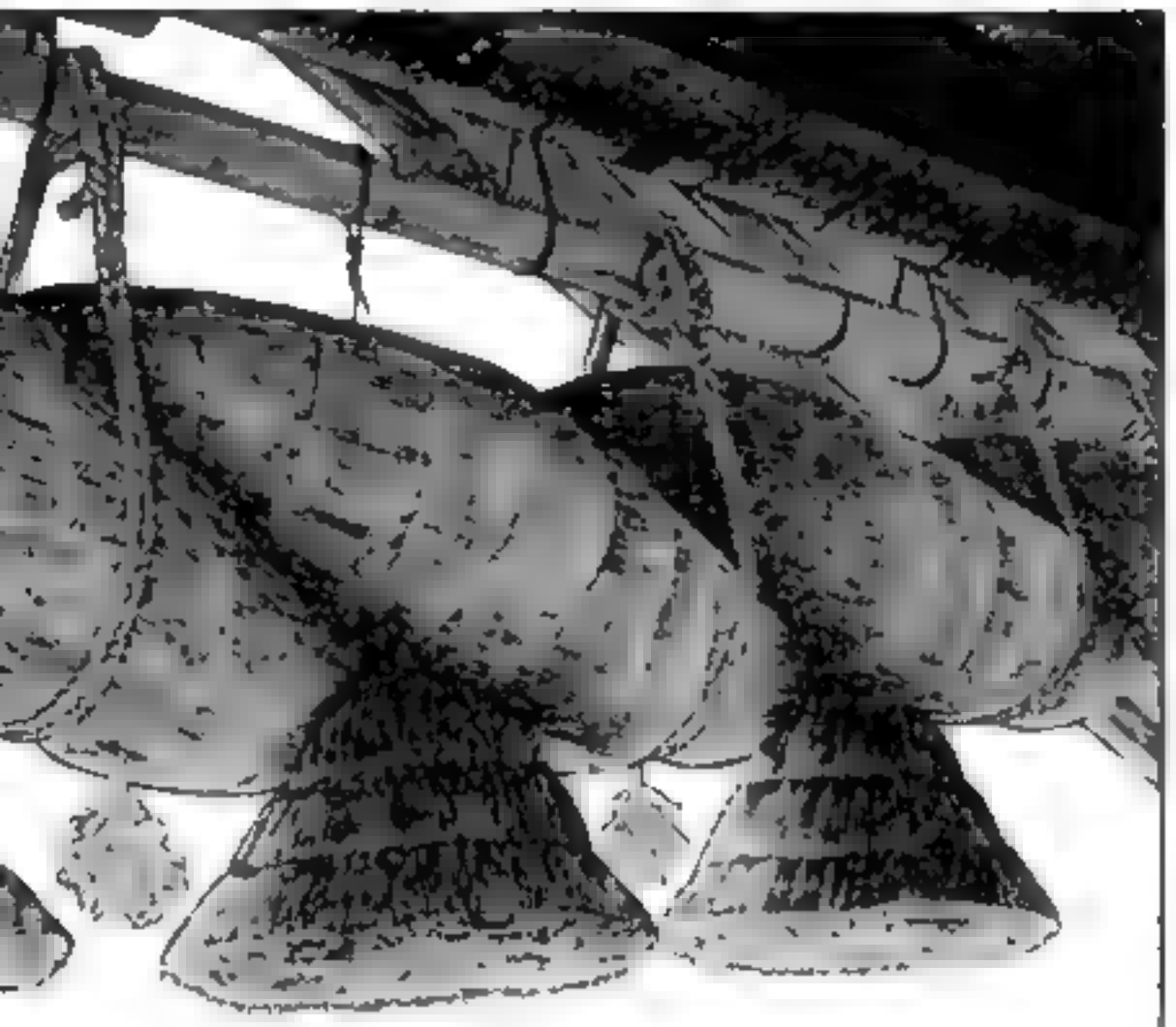
We humbly, ever humbly beseech thee!

O God Onamuchi, of the shrine of Kizuki, within the blue mounts of the Province of Izumo, whose pillars are erected deep upon the bedrock, and whose rafters extend to the heavenly plains!

And as the thick Forests in the distance are cleared away by a burning and sharp sickle...


As the morning wind blows away the morning mist, and the evening wind the evening mist...

Dispel the unclean spirit of disease from this place!!



Bestow thy protection upon Kana of the Imibe, For now and Forever-more!!

Thank you. I feel like I'm being protected now.

Alright, then... I completely Forgot that there's a nearby museum that has the stumps oF Ancient Izumo Grand Shrine's sacred pillars, which they recently excavated From these grounds, on display.

N...No, not here...

And now that we're all together, let's go grab lunch after we see it!

Yeah, do it!!

More im-portantly, we want to see your "Daikoku", Uncle!

Really?

Muna-
kata!
Hmm?

Hello?
Oh, Mr
Hata.

I'm an acquaintance of Dr. Imibe, and I got a call from her last night, telling me that there was something urgent she wanted me looking into. Hahaha...
Is this Professor Munakata speaking? This is Hata, from the International Geophysics Center

and there was one!

She asked about any major volcanic eruptions in the year 1110 CE...

There was an eruption ...!!

An ice core is a sample of the layers of snow that have been accumulating for centuries...

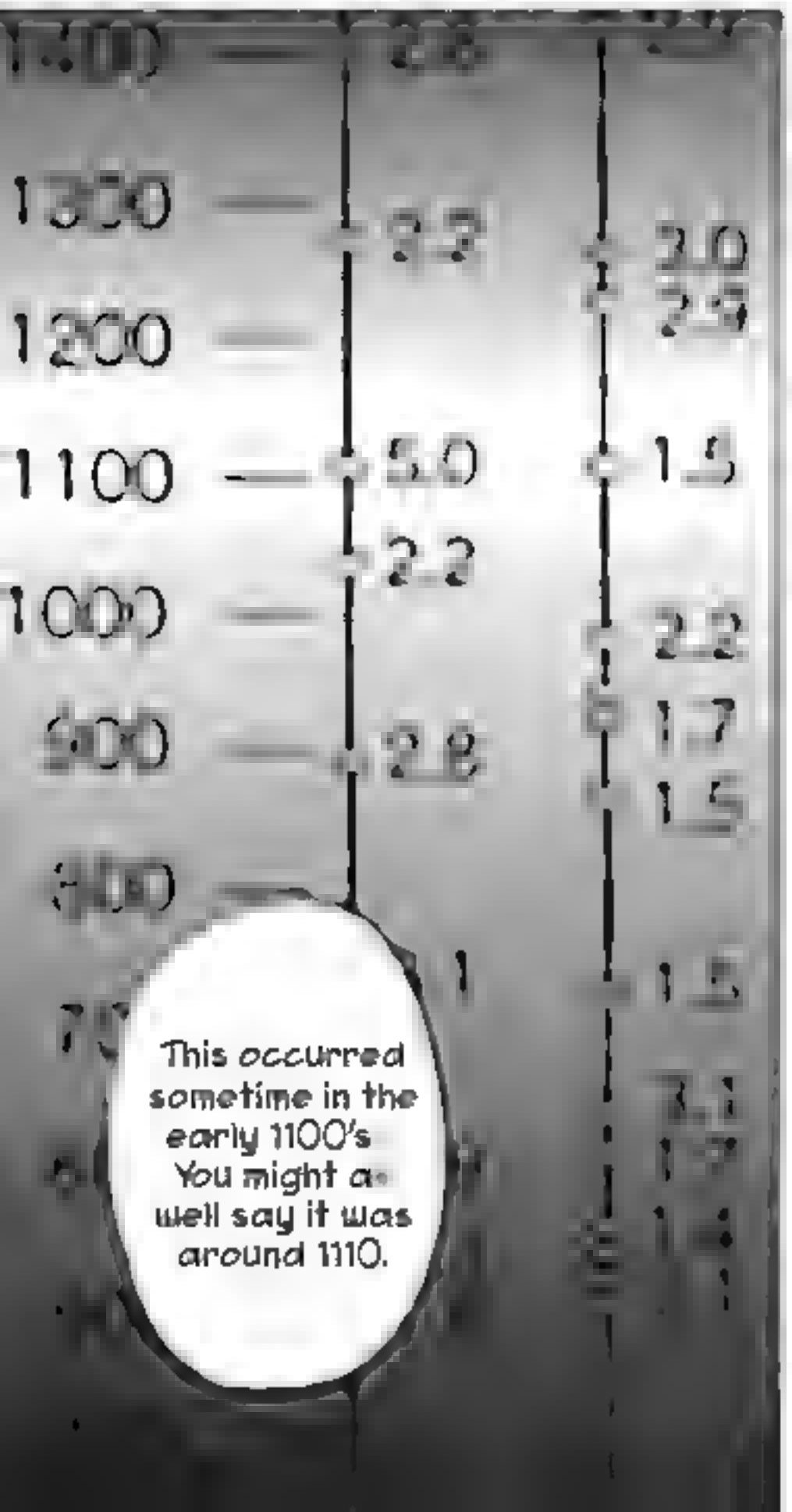
And you can learn about past climate changes by reading the "ice streaks" in chronological order.

In 1978, a joint team of Danish, Swiss, and American scientists collected an ice core from Greenland.

They detected volcanic eruptions from about that time period from cores they extracted in two locations, GRIP and Dye3.

A major [redacted] eruption will cause acidic snow to fall for an extended period of time, which can be seen as a layer

The margin [redacted]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1.1
1.1
1.1

but in the northern hemis-phere!

that the eruption happened not in the southern hemisphere or near the equator

Greenland

But there are no such traces from that time period in cores collected in Antarctica. This means...

So there'd be no contradiction there, even if it occurred south of the Japanese archipelago... in Taiwan or Philippines!

But since Taiwan doesn't have many volcanoes, it's more likely that it was the Philip-pines.

Mt. Mayon

Mt. Pinatubo

Mt. Apo

There are volcanoes that are active on a larger scale, such as Mt. Mayon and Mt. Pinatubo, the latter of which had a massive eruption in 1991.

By the way, if you don't mind me asking, could you do me one more favor?
So even if we can't specify a volcano, at least there's circumstantial evidence... Thanks, this is a great help!

That's right. Assuming a volcano erupted in the Philippines, would it have been possible for the shock-waves to reach the Japanese archipelago, almost 3,000 kilometers away?

Shock-waves?

I understand that these differ depending on the terrain and weather conditions, but I have heard that tremors and low-frequency sounds called "infrasound" can travel fairly far.

The eruption of Krakatoa in Indonesia in the 19th Century was famous for having shock-waves that circled the globe seven times...

So this is a pillar of Ancient Izumo Grand Shrine...

They had together three giant trees, which analysis has found to be cedar from the Kamakura Period, and used that to make a pillar three meters in diameter

But the shrine was still so tall that it collapsed an average of once every 25 years. They ended up rebuilding the shrine half as high

I'm just repaying you for your "white hare"

Sorry to cause you that trouble, Inuie

That collapse may have been caused by a volcanic eruption From the Philippines!

The shrine also happened to collapse in 1109, the year before 100 giant trees drifted ashore on Izumo.

!

The thunderous roar and the infrasound crossed the ocean, refracting along the way, and passed through the sky over the Japanese archipelago...

Over 40 years had passed since its last reconstruction. The pillars would have aged so much that they would fall at the slightest

No one would have felt it, but a 48-meter building like Izumo Grand Shrine, which was the tallest building at the time, might have taken the brunt of it.

A great many trees were engulfed in the lava and burst into flame.

Meanwhile, a massive horde had encircled the mouths of the erupting volcano.

They travelled the 3,000 kilometers across the Kuroshio and Tsushima Currents... and drifted to Izumo in 1110, the year after the eruption.

S...So you mean that Izumo Grand Shrine collapsed because of an eruption, and was rebuilt with the trees that drifted ashore because of that same eruption...!?

That's the truth behind the "Construction of Gathering Trees"!

and each time, humans patiently built a new shrine. That may have been the original Transfer Ceremony...

By the will of the gods, the old shrine collapses,

Whereas Izumo Grand Shrine was doing the exact same thing naturally, years before them.

Ise Shrine still conducts a Transfer Ceremony, where the main hall is rebuilt once every 20 years.

The volcano that brings death and destruction also prompts a grand regeneration of the environment.

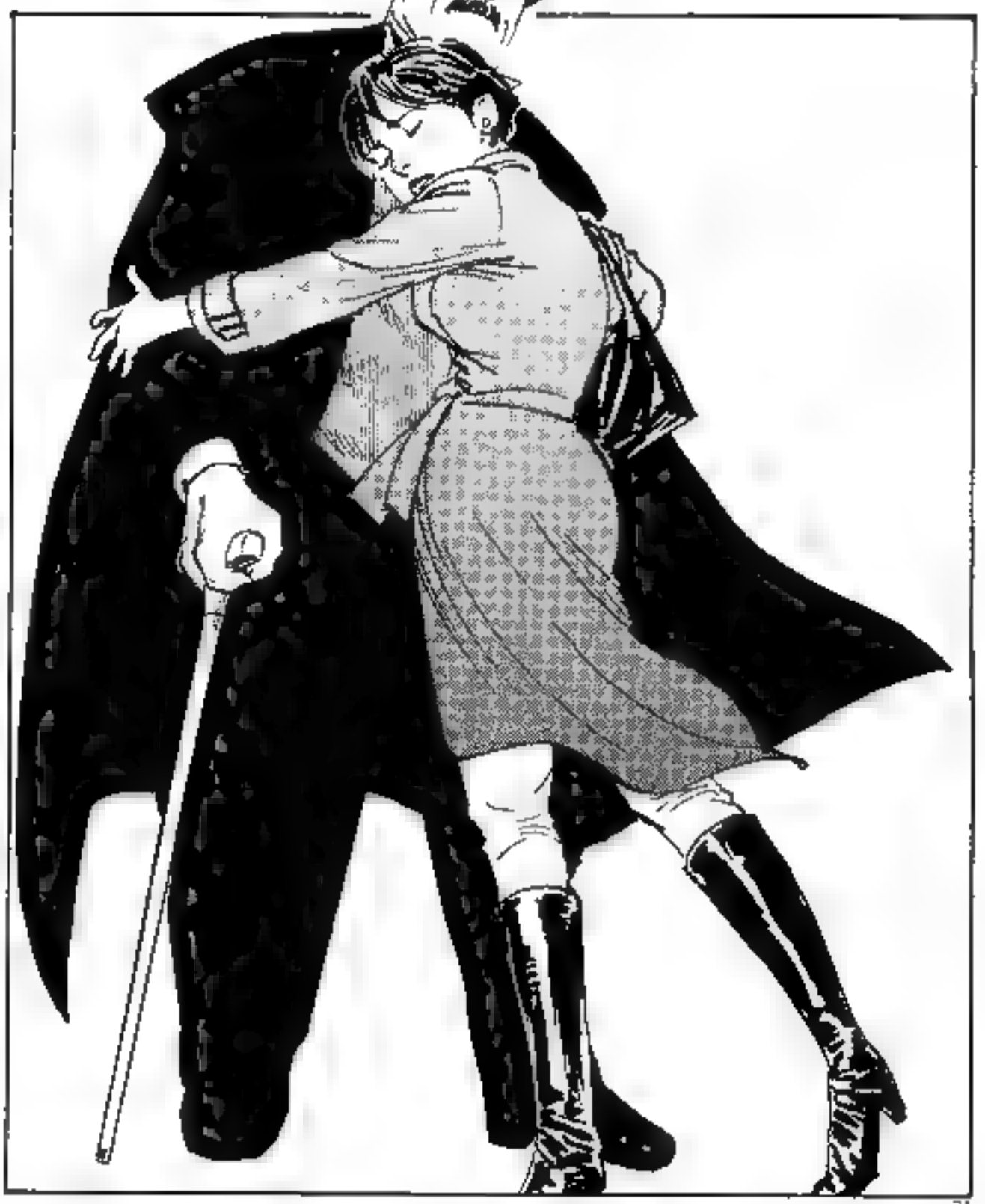
One theory suggests that Okuninushi, with his many faces, was worshipped by the Jomon as a god of volcanoes that lived on Hoki Daisen.

What do you think, Imibe?

I'm going back to Tokyo...

Good!

You're like a great, big tree...



……

It was a calm sea of spring,
great trees could be

THE CASE FILES OF PROFESSOR MUNAKATA

CHAPTER 29

PRESENTED BY

HOKUTO NO GUN

TRANSLATED BY

SYSTEMATICCHAOS

EDITING BY

HIGHTIDE AND KAZUHIKO

PROOFREADING BY

DESTORYERRING

CHAPTER 30: HANDS OF THE LITTLE ONES

General Hospital

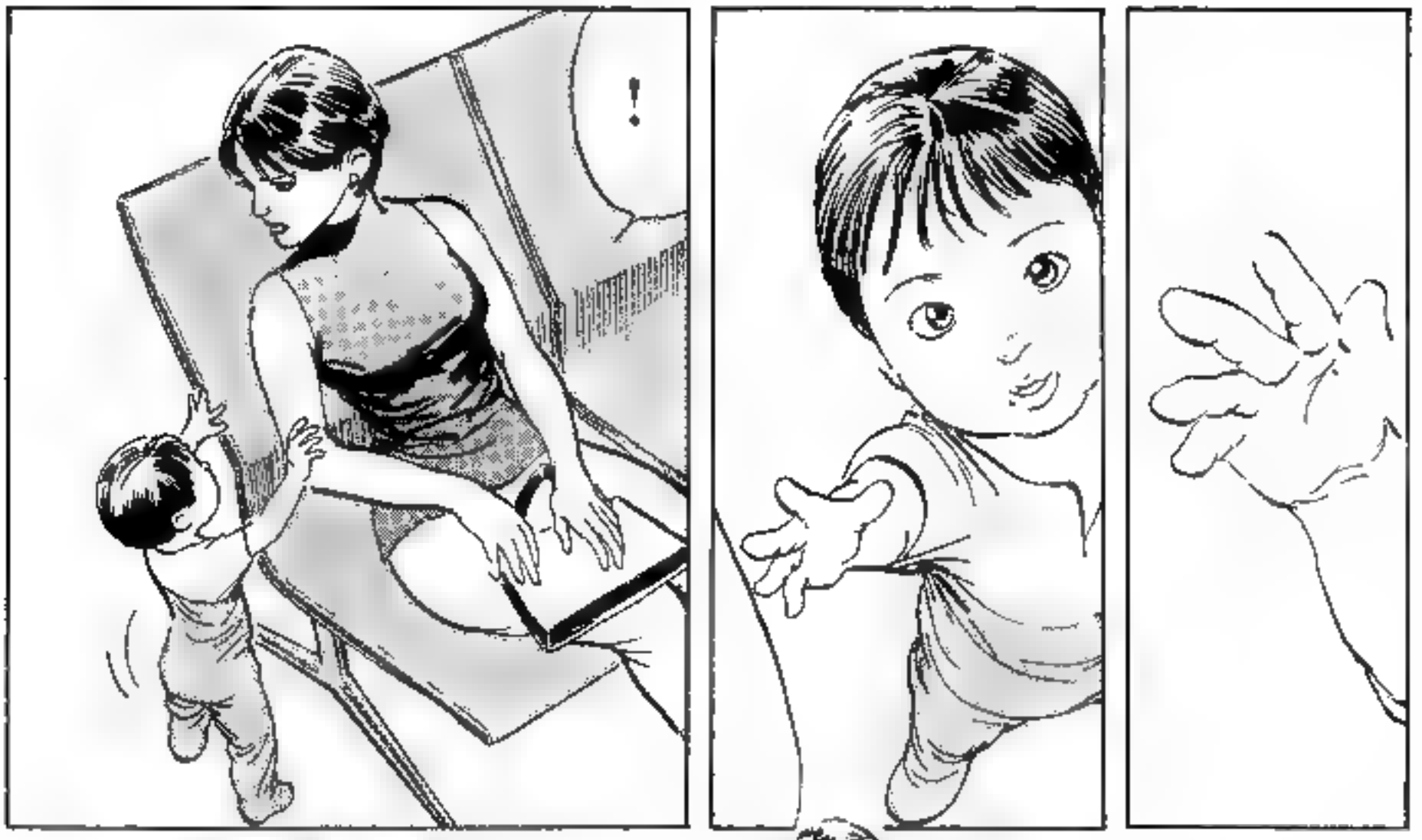
Gynecology

Orthopedics

Radiology

Mrs....

Mr.... Mr....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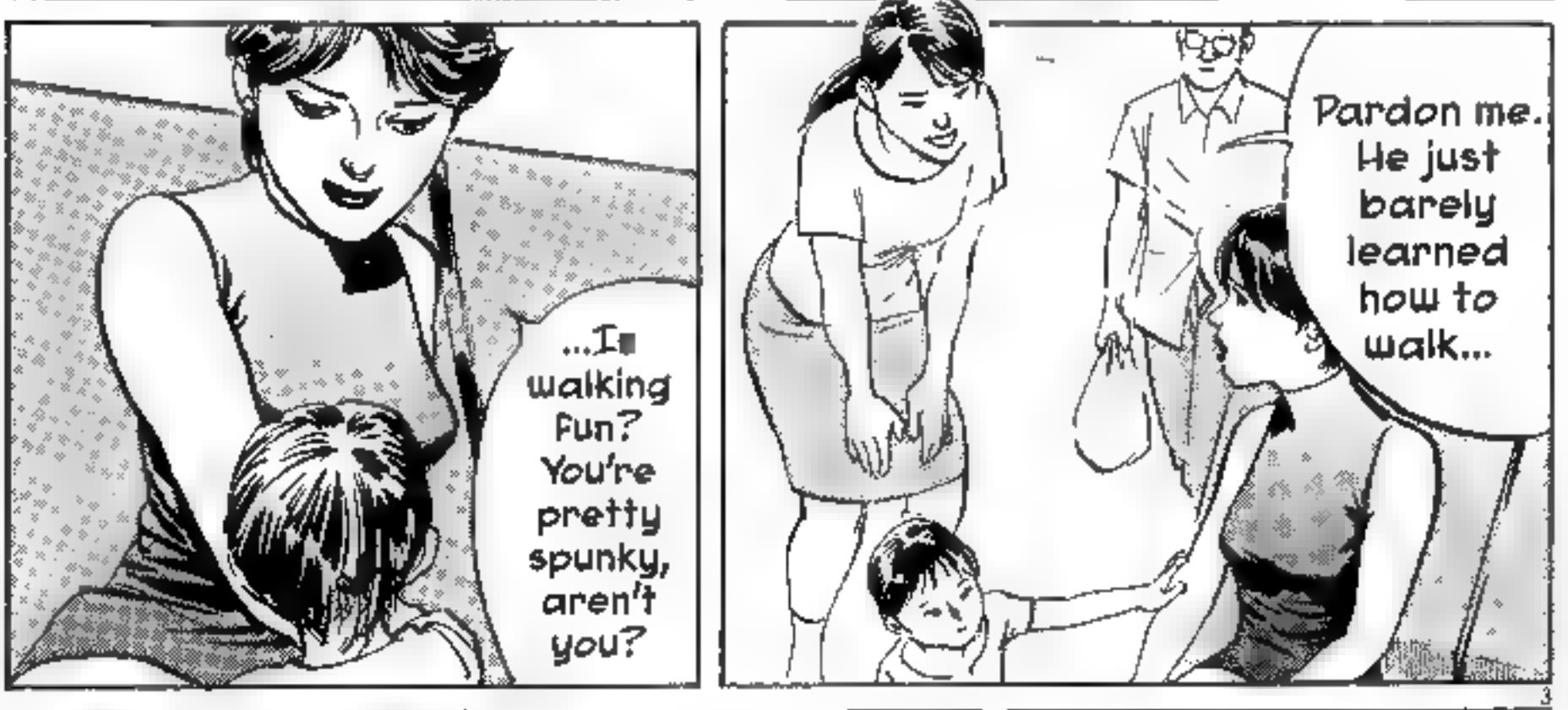
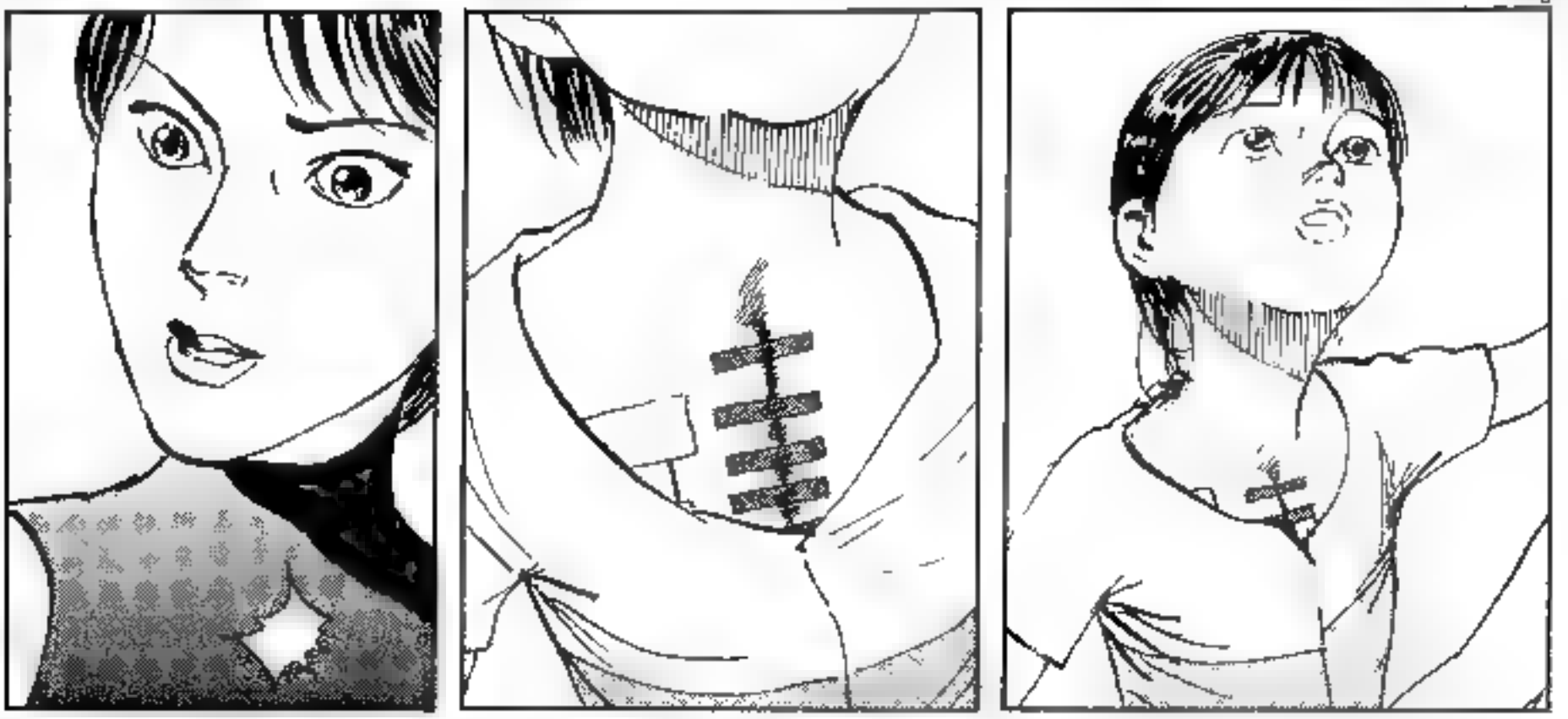

...I■ walking fun? You're pretty spunky, aren't you?
Pardon me. He just barely learned how to walk...



But he's so small...

He has a deformity in his heart...

Dai's gone through surgery twice in the past year since he's been born.

Come on, now. You've got to get back to bed, or you'll feel worse.

4

...Are you sure about this, Ms. Imibe?

If we perform a laparotomy and find that the tumor is advanced cancer...

We'll have to excise not only the ovary, but your womb and lymph nodes as well.

It's not like I'll be any less of a woman if you remove my womb, is it?

Even if it did, I'd pretend to be a woman, anyway.

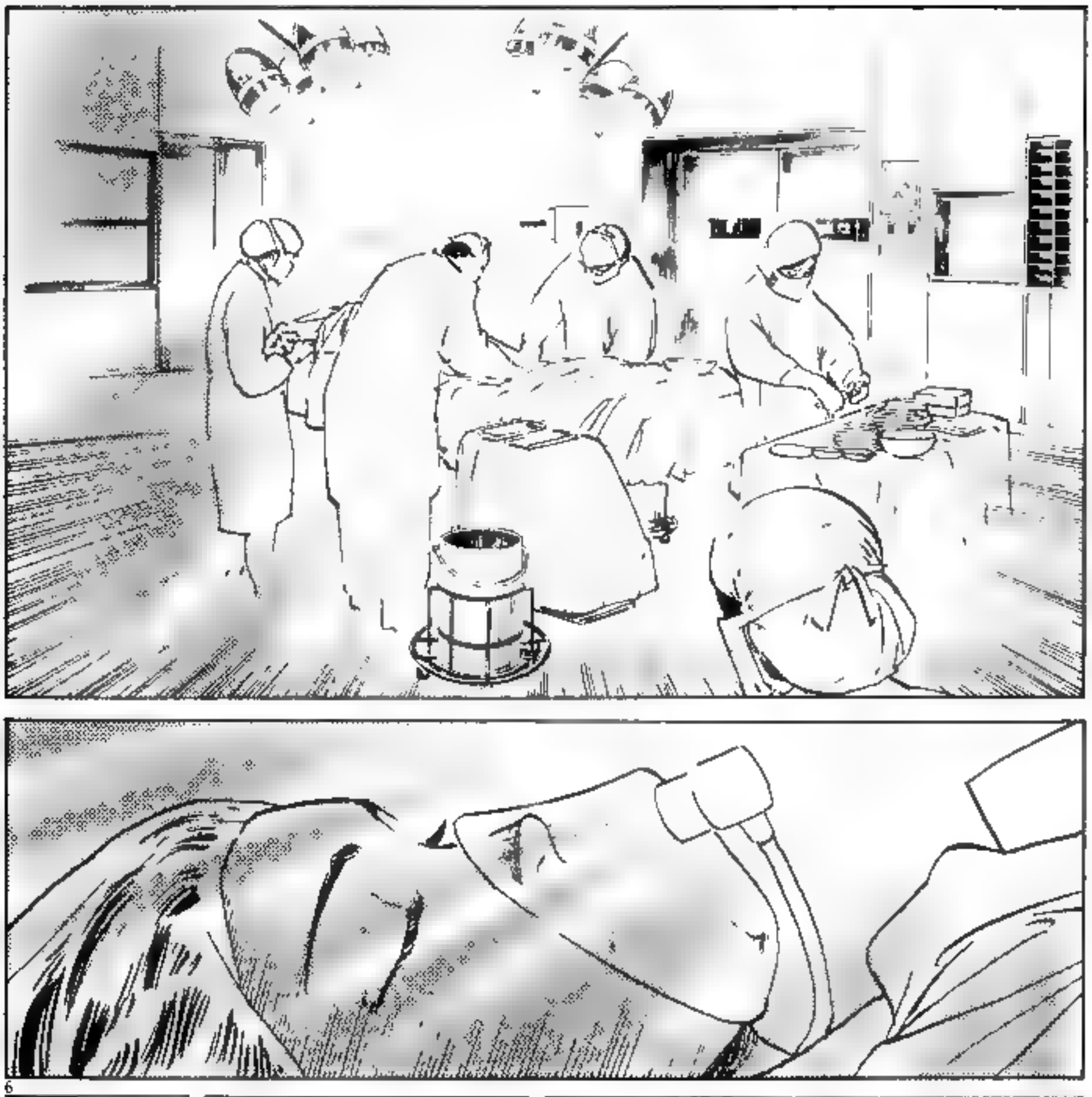
This will lower your risk of metastasis, but of course, it means you'll be unable to have children.

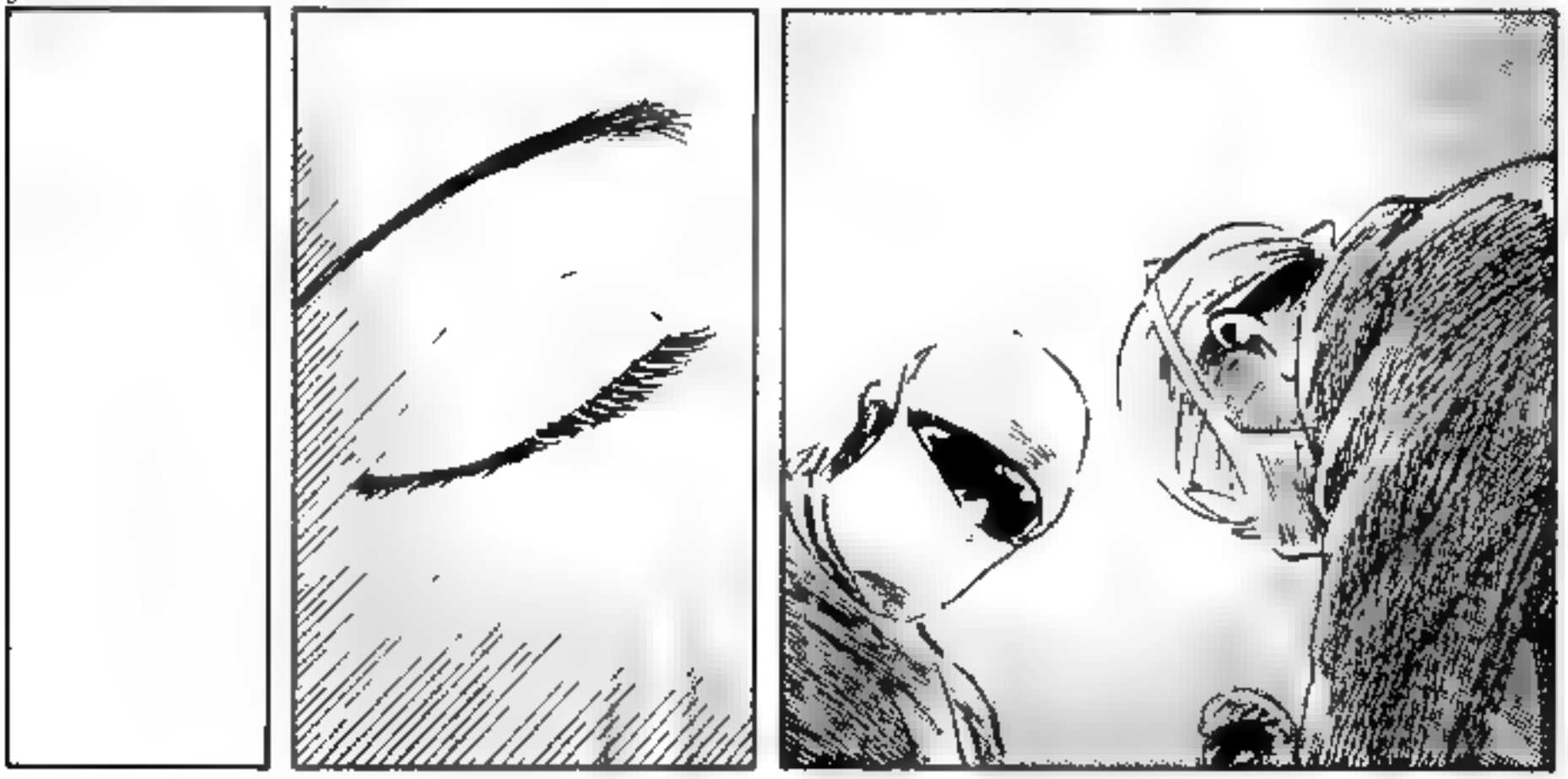
5

I'll deal with my feelings myself!

Just perform the surgery, please!

Well, I'm afraid this is hardly something to joke about...





Outskirts of Eniwa City, Hokkaido

I was an old friend of your father, Professor Tsutsumi, but I didn't know until the wake that you were studying archaeology at a university in Sapporo.

Thank you very much for coming to my father's wake.

I'm giving a lecture in Asahikawa tomorrow, and I thought I'd stop by before that.

.....

I betrayed my folklorist father's trust. I wasn't even there when he died. How's that for being a bad son...?

He looked so happy ...
He showed me a picture of you long ago, when you were just a baby.
These are the remains of a Middle Jomon settlement and "pit grave"...
.....
Did he, now...
9
The Eniwa area is known for the "Kashiwagigawa Ruins", and we believe these ruins were from about the same time.
Have you found any pottery or bones?

From the Jomon period right through to the Kofun period, blood relatives, like parents and children or siblings, would most commonly be buried together.

An adult man and woman... Husband and wife?

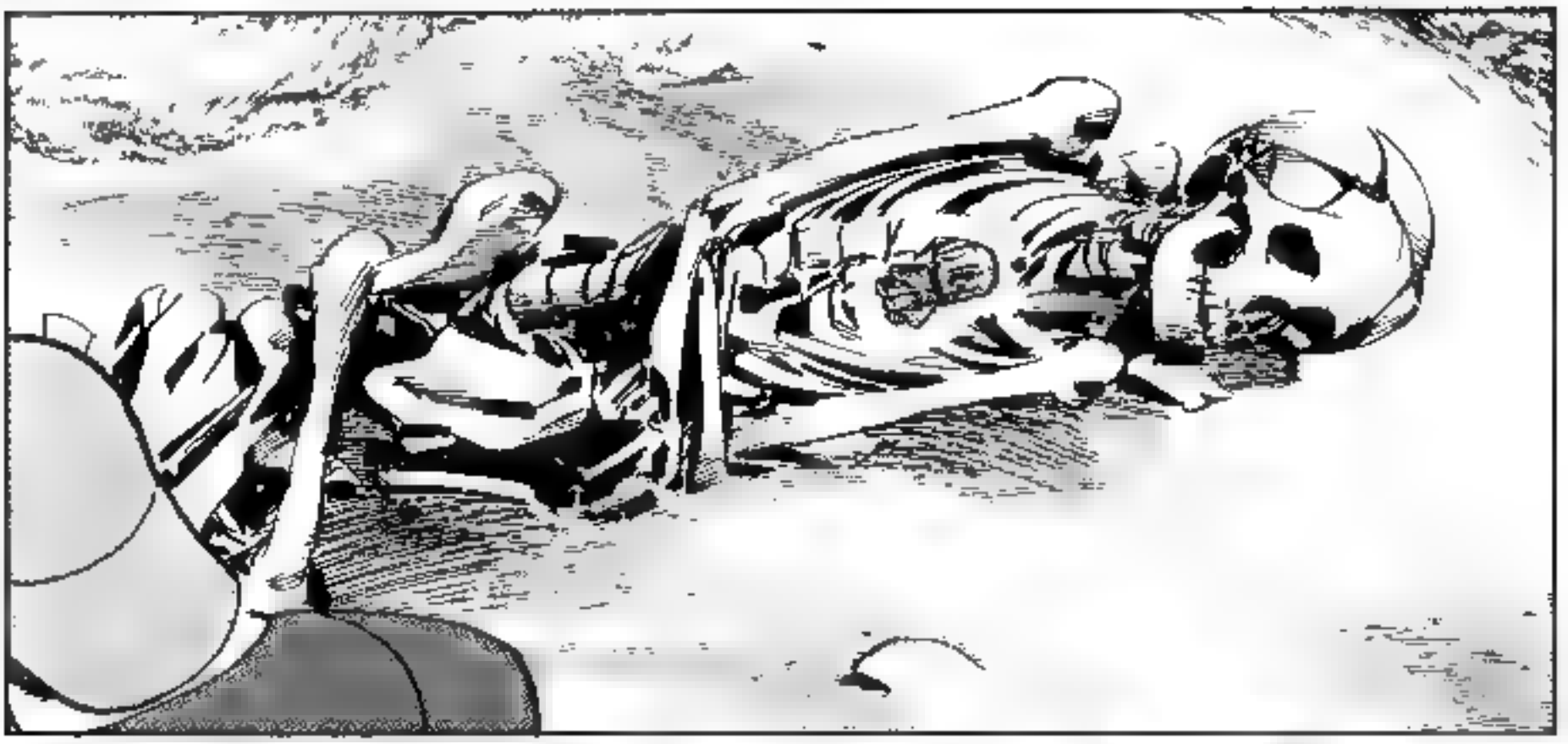
We found an adult man and woman in one of the pit graves.

They're probably brother and sister.

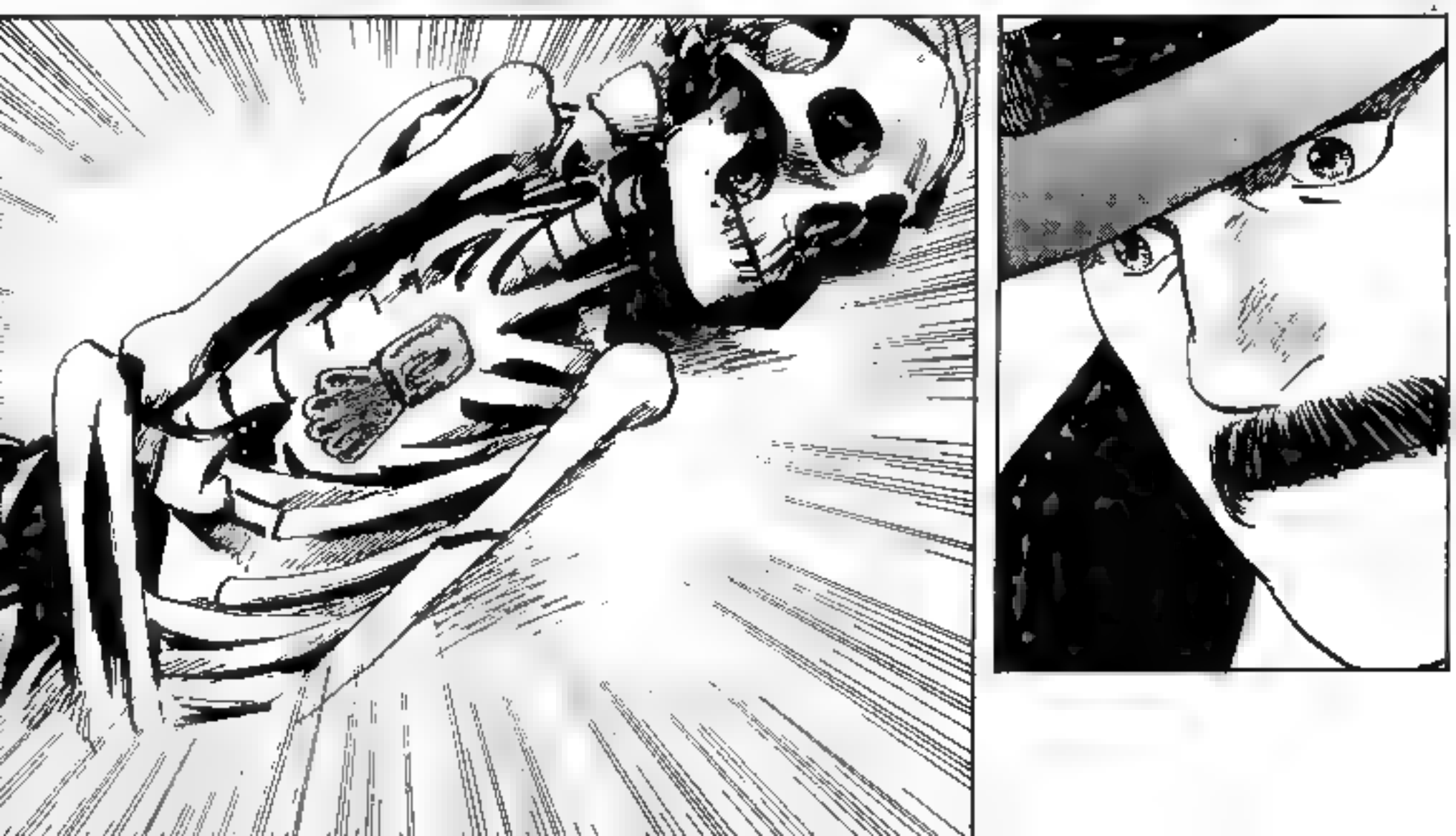
It's true that blood may have been the only connection they had to one another back before Japan became an agricultural society and developed the concepts of households and lineage...

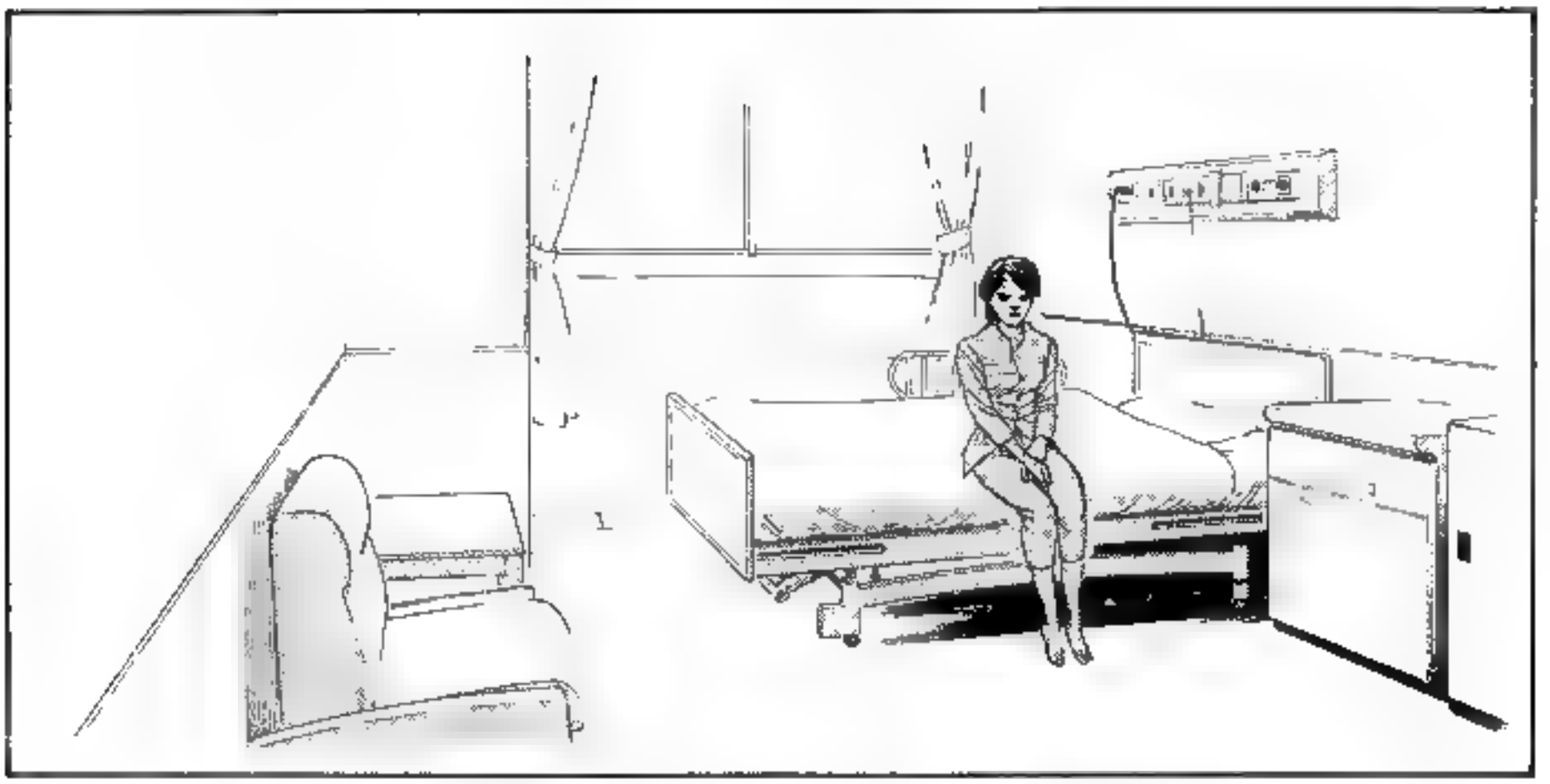
So there was a long period in which blood was prioritized over love.

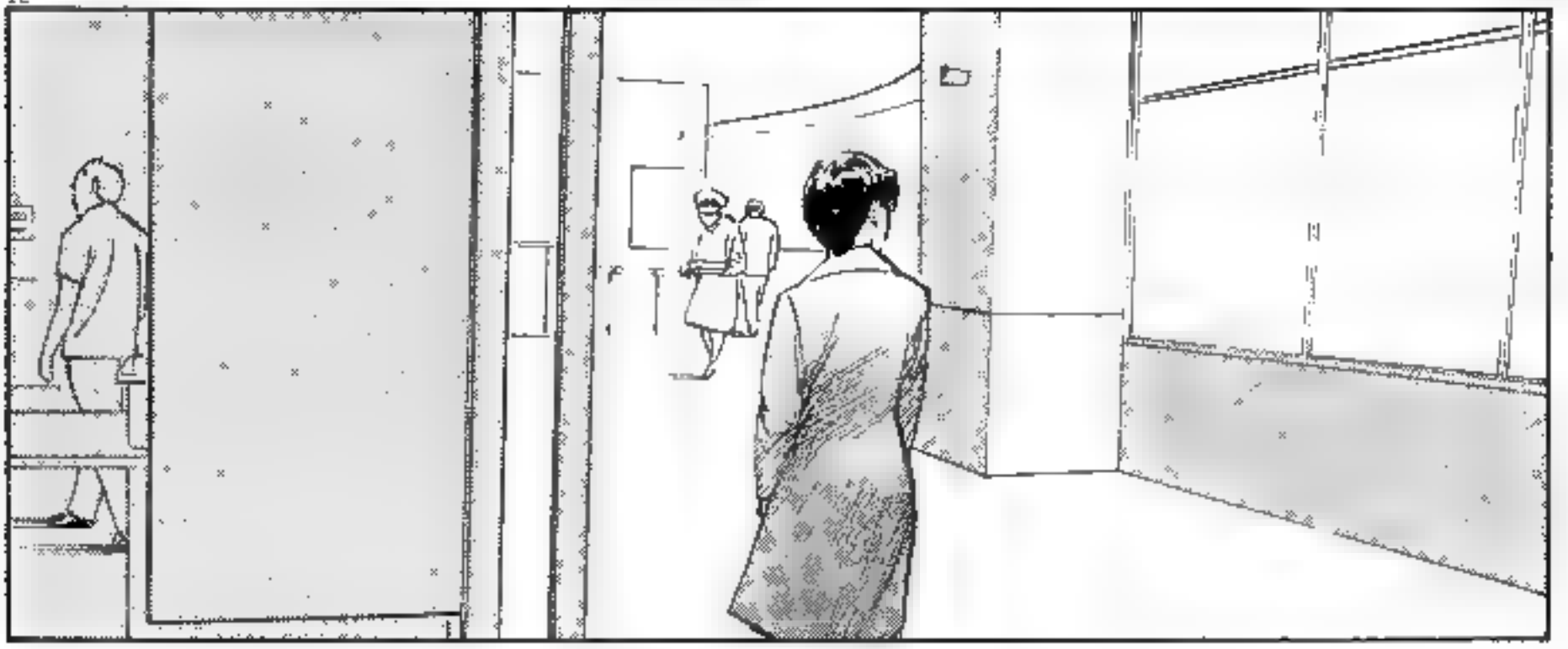
...Actually, we've just unearthed something rather interesting, Professor Munakata.

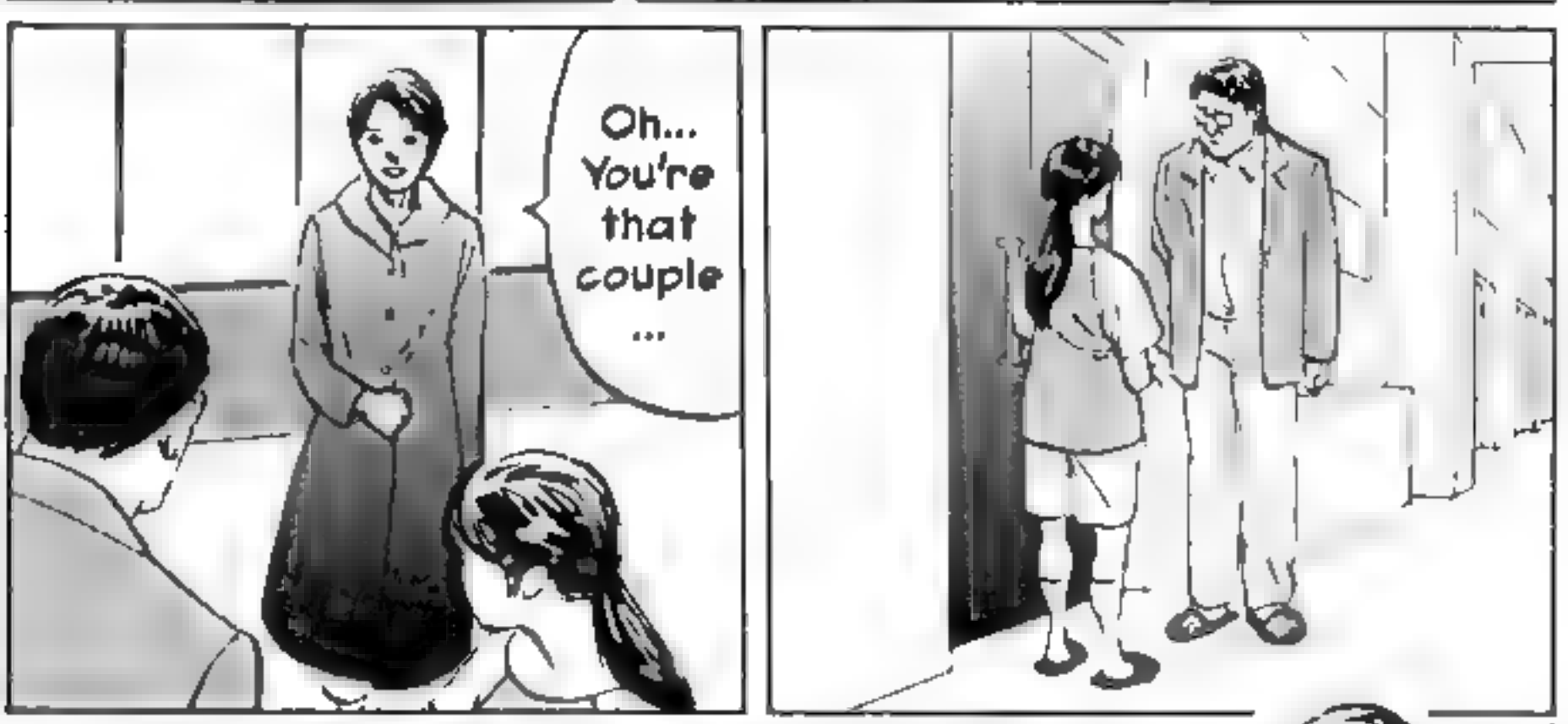


Do you see the piece of pottery around her chest?
It looks like it's an adult woman.
Can you take a break and let us see it for a second?
Sure.








Oh... You're that couple ...

We just had our last time together in this very room...

...We're just waiting for them to finish the autopsy.

I took more pictures than you could count over the past year but I just wanted to leave behind a memory of him...

And Papa took dozens of pictures...

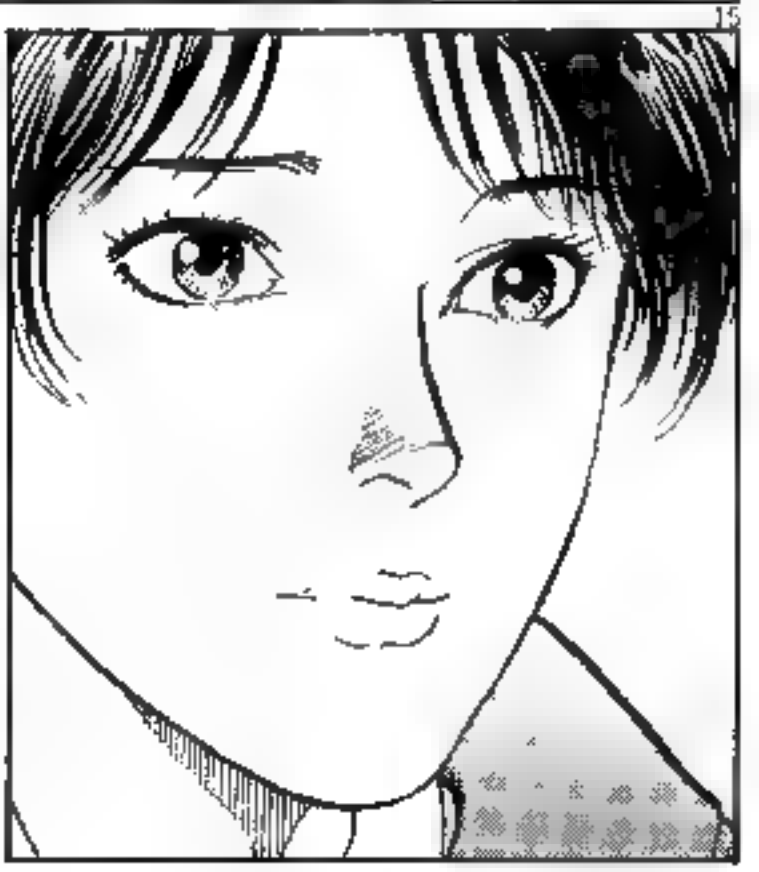
14

This is Dai's life ...

.....

No matter how much shorter and more painful it was, we've come to think that Dai led a full life.

We took Dai's hand-print and footprint, at the hospital's recommen-dation.



They were made by pressing an infant's hands and feet onto the clay, and they have a magical pattern on the back.

Hand-printed slates have been excavated from pit graves in four ruin sites in Eniwa and Kashiwagigawa, along with foot-printed ones, and they've become a topic of much discussion.

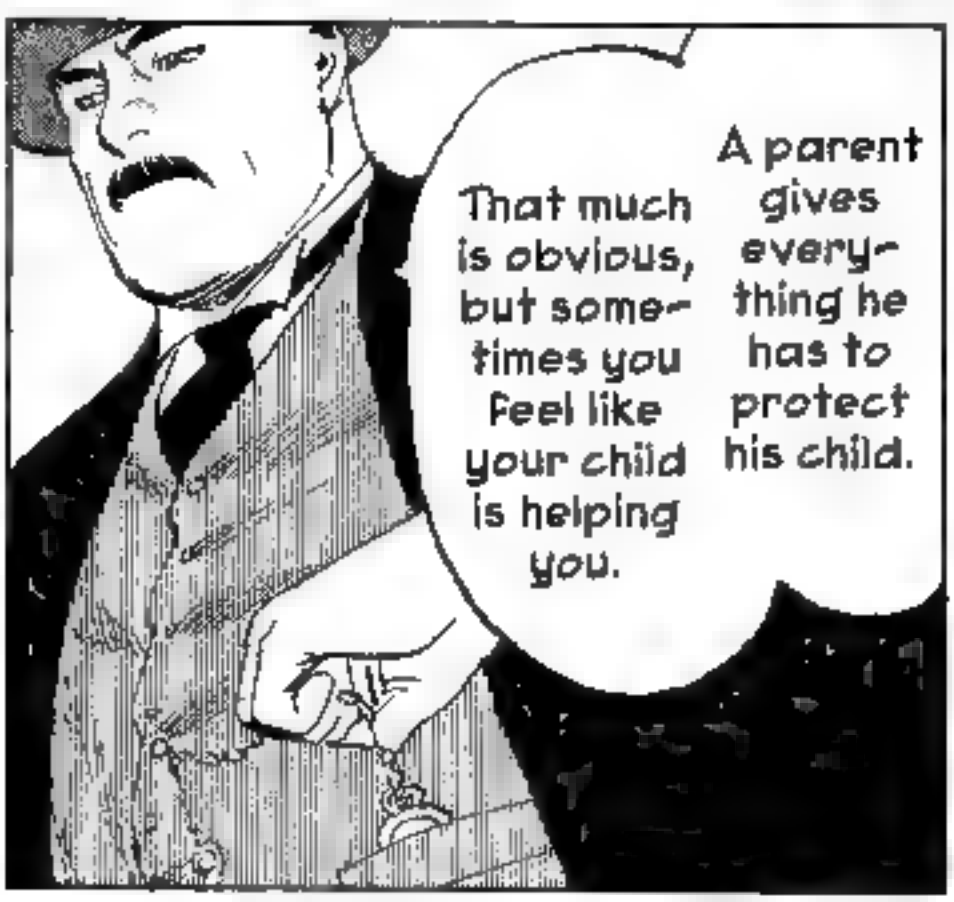
Similar yet simpler hand- and foot-prints have been found mainly in Tohoku. All of them have a hole, which might have been for a string.

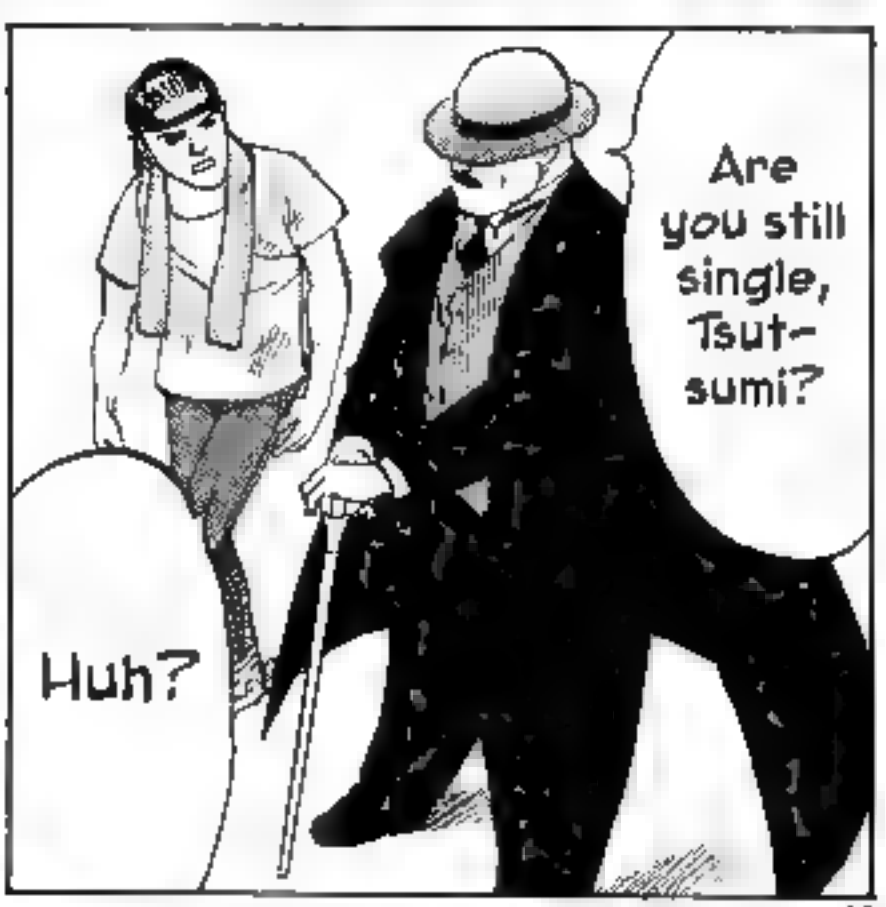
I didn't know what kind of people the slates they unearthed from Kashiwagigawa Ruins were buried with...

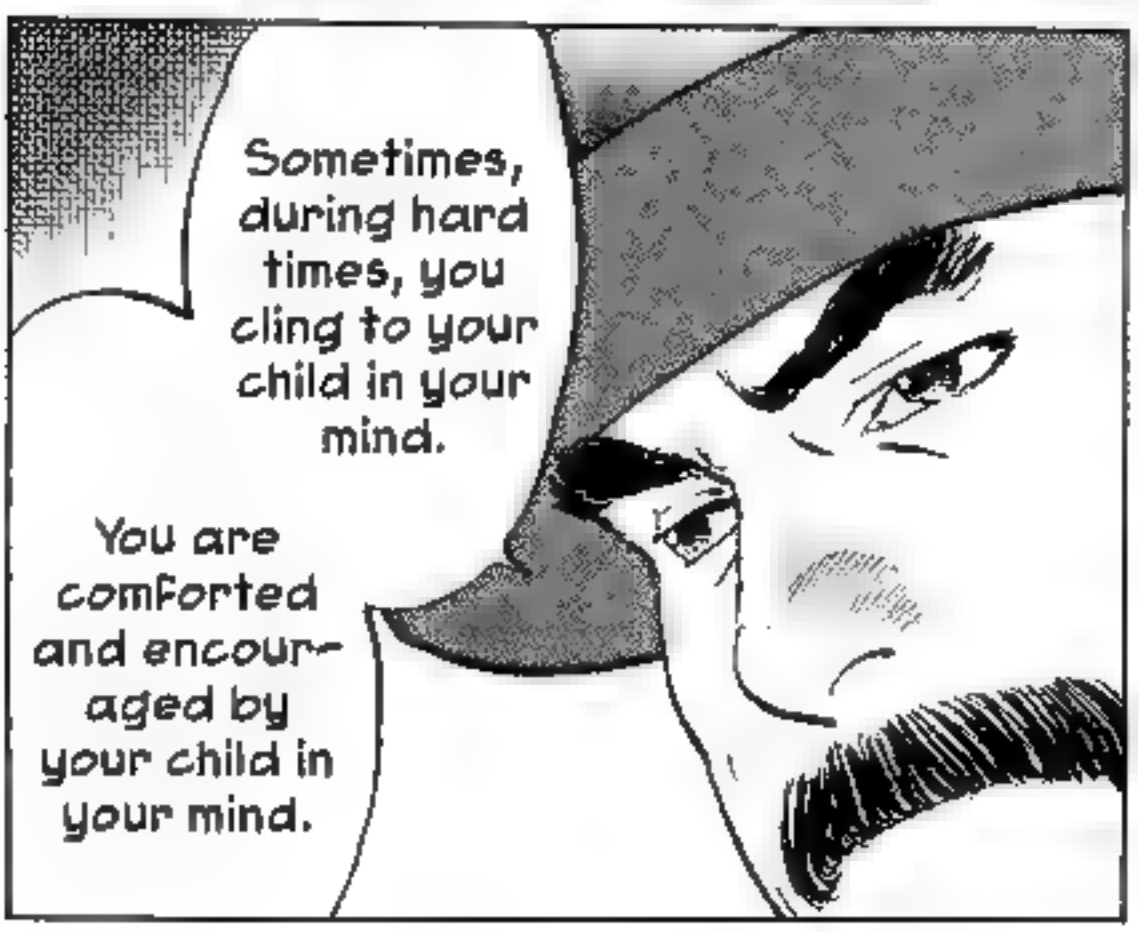
So either they were hung in their dwellings, or worn around their neck like a pendant.

.....

There's a theory that these were mementos from when their children were born, or when they took their first steps.
Either that, or they were offered to parents who died and left children behind... What do you think, Professor?


A parent gives everything he has to protect his child.
That much is obvious, but sometimes you feel like your child is helping you.


Are you still single, Tsutsumi?
Huh?


Sometimes, during hard times, you cling to your child in your mind.
You are comforted and encouraged by your child in your mind.

You feel strong because of your child, you are encouraged by your child...

It could've meant the same thing as your father taking a picture of you everywhere he went.

These may have been originally made to pray for the health of their children, but they may have been a charm of protection to the parents as well.

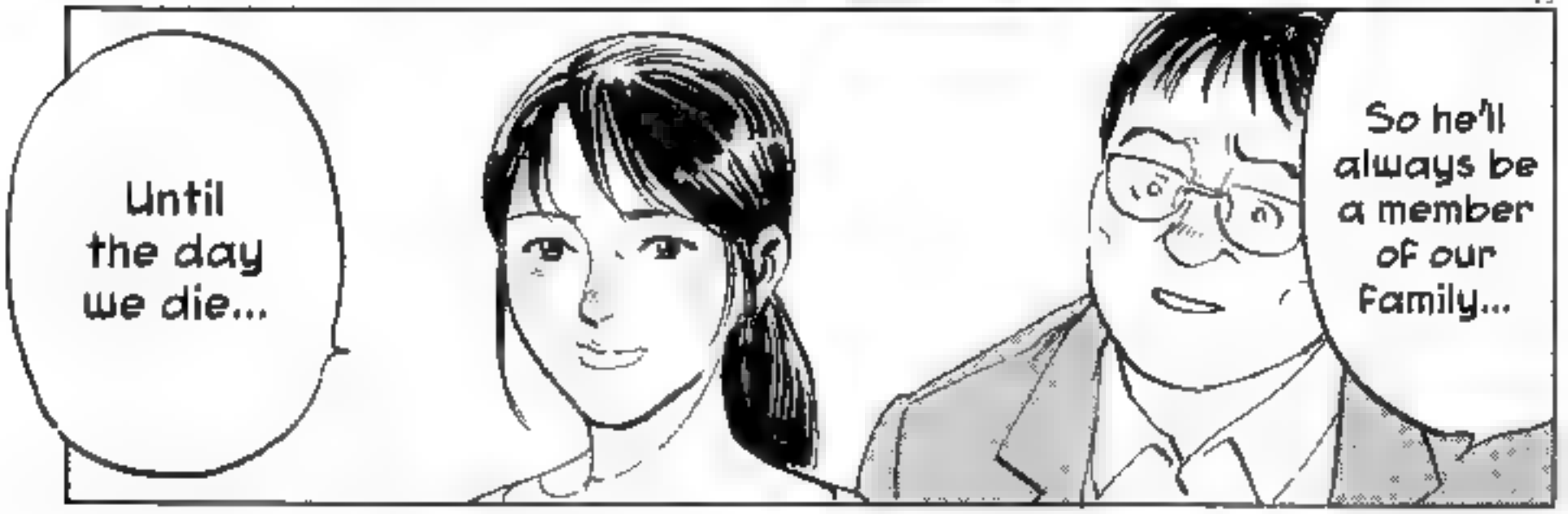
.....

No way... My father was a harsh man. He would've never shown such a weak side.

You'll understand when you become a father. You have your father's blood, after all...

Now... I wonder if this woman's child grew up healthy ...?

If he ever has any little brothers or sisters, we want him to join in our talking and laughing.
We'll keep it hanging in our house.


Until the day we die...
So he'll always be a member of our family...

U...

AA
AAA
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UH...

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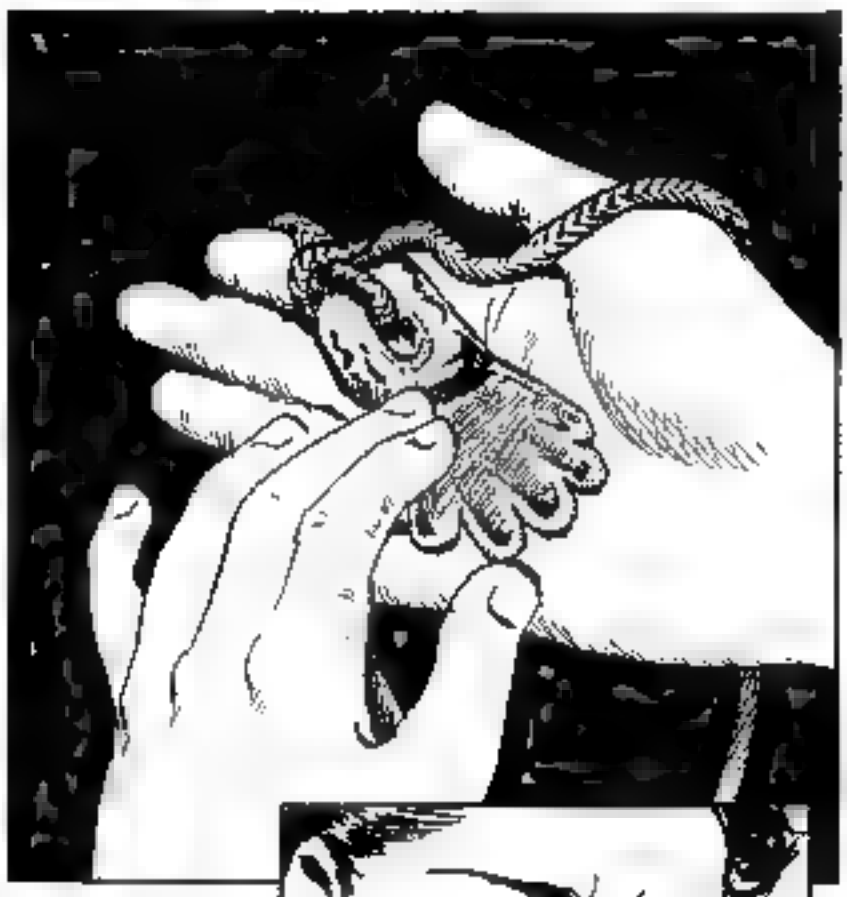
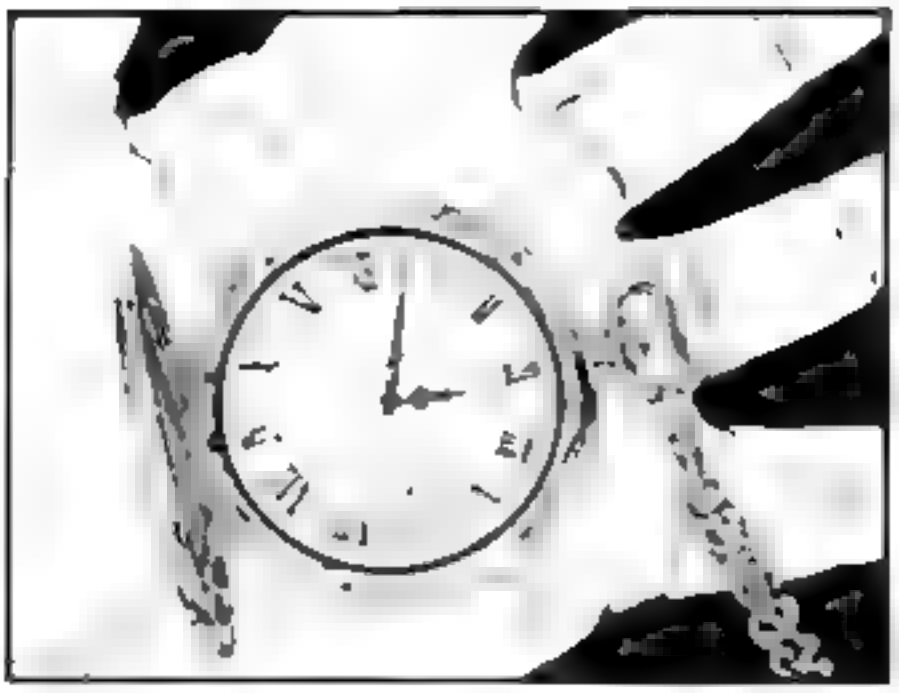


I have a feeling that this has something to do with the hand- and foot-prints unearthed from burial pits being solely of infants...
The infant mortality rate was high long ago... There may have been many cases where what was supposed to be a charm became a memento.



THE OAKE RECORD OF PROFESSOR MUNAKATA

CHAPTER 30

PRESENTED BY

HOKUTO NO GUN

TRANSLATED BY

SYSTEMATICCHAOS

EDITING BY

HIGHTIDE AND KAZUHIKO

PROOFREADING BY

DESTORYERRING

CHAPTER 31

THE CYCLOPS AND MINISTER YUSUKA

The legend of "Minister Yuriwaka" came to be familiarized in the Middle Ages, through Kowaka dances, Joruri narratives, and regional folklore

Then, word came that a fleet from Silla had attacked Hakata.

He was a great hero that could draw even an iron bow, but he lived his days in peace with his wife, the beautiful Kasugahime

And Yuri-waka was ordered to rout Silla!

Having won the battle, yet fully spent, Yuriwaka landed on a deserted island called Genkai Island, and fell into a deep sleep ..

[illegible] stranding Yuriwaka.

One day, she gave a rice ball to Yuriwaka's hawk, "Midori-

Two years passed... Kasugahime was informed of Yuriwaka's death in battle, and Beppu, now governor, persistently attempted to court her, but she spurned his advances and turned him down

Yuriwaka was living on Genkai Island

Overjoyed at the sight of Midori-maru, he wrote a letter to his wife in his blood.

Her husband was alive! Filled with joy, she tried to make Midorimaru carry him inkstones, brushes, and paper

The last link between Yuriwaka and his wife had been severed...

But the load was too heavy for a hawk...

Beppu Sadasumi was holding the traditional New [illegible] archery ritual at his estate.

And there, appeared a strange man who called himself

[illegible]

traitors!!

[illegible]

This is the tale of "Minister Yuriwaka", the greatest general in the Land of the Rising Sun.

Meiji Period writer and doctor of literature Tsubouchi Shoyo who published an astonishing interpretation of this legend

The ancient Greek legend travelled to Japan, where he was called "Yuriwaka", in line with his Latin name, "Ulysses"!

Yuriwaka was Odysseus, main character of Homer's epic poem, "The Odyssey"!

Odysseus (Ulysses), king of Ithaca, left behind his wife Penelope to join the Grecian army in the battle of Troy, and was returning home after their victory in the decade-long battle

But their voyage was hindered by a Cyclops and the Sirens, among others.

On the island of Thrinacia, while Odysseus was sleeping, his crew killed and ate a forbidden cow

Being the only one who did not eat the cow, Odysseus alone survived and drifted to a desert island, where he spent eight years.

Now twenty years since leaving his homeland... The goddess Athena felt pity for the homesick Odysseus, and arranged his return to Ithaca.

Meanwhile, nobles from nearby islands gathered at the palace of Ithaca to court Penelope, and began a contest of courtship.

While Penelope attempted to avoid these audacious men, she could no longer resist their advances.

She promised to become the wife of whoever could shoot an arrow from her husband's strongbow through a line of axe heads.

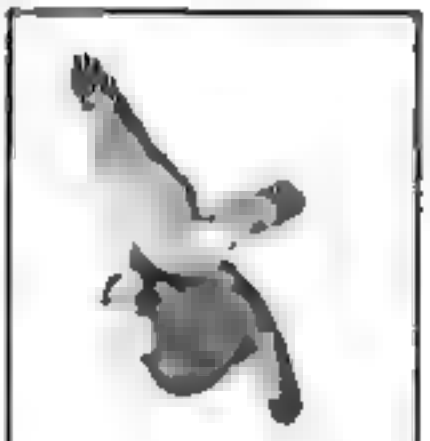
But not a single one of them could even string the bow.

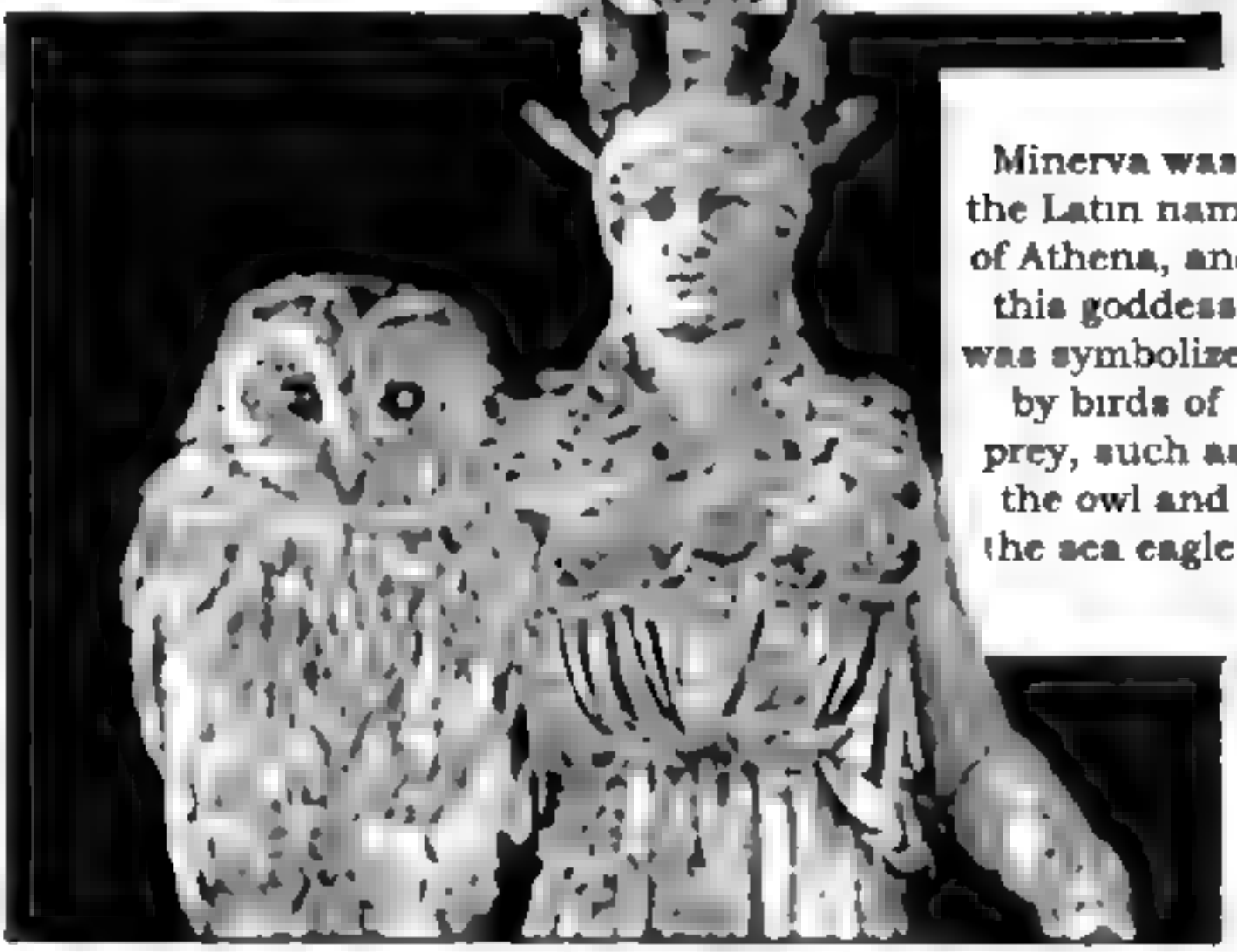
Among the spectators, a filthy beggar issued his challenge.

It was none other than Odysseus, who had disguised himself as a beggar to get rid of the insolent men all at once

Not only was Yuriwaka Ulysses, but the hawk Midorimaru came from "Minerva"

Tsubouchi Shoyo indicated that both stories have very similar plots, and insisted that the Greek story was adapted in a Japanese way.





Minerva was the Latin name of Athena, and this goddess was symbolized by birds of prey, such as the owl and the sea eagle.

Usa Municipal Culture Lecture Presentation

Minister Yuriwaka and Usa

East Asia University of Culture Professor of Folkloristics

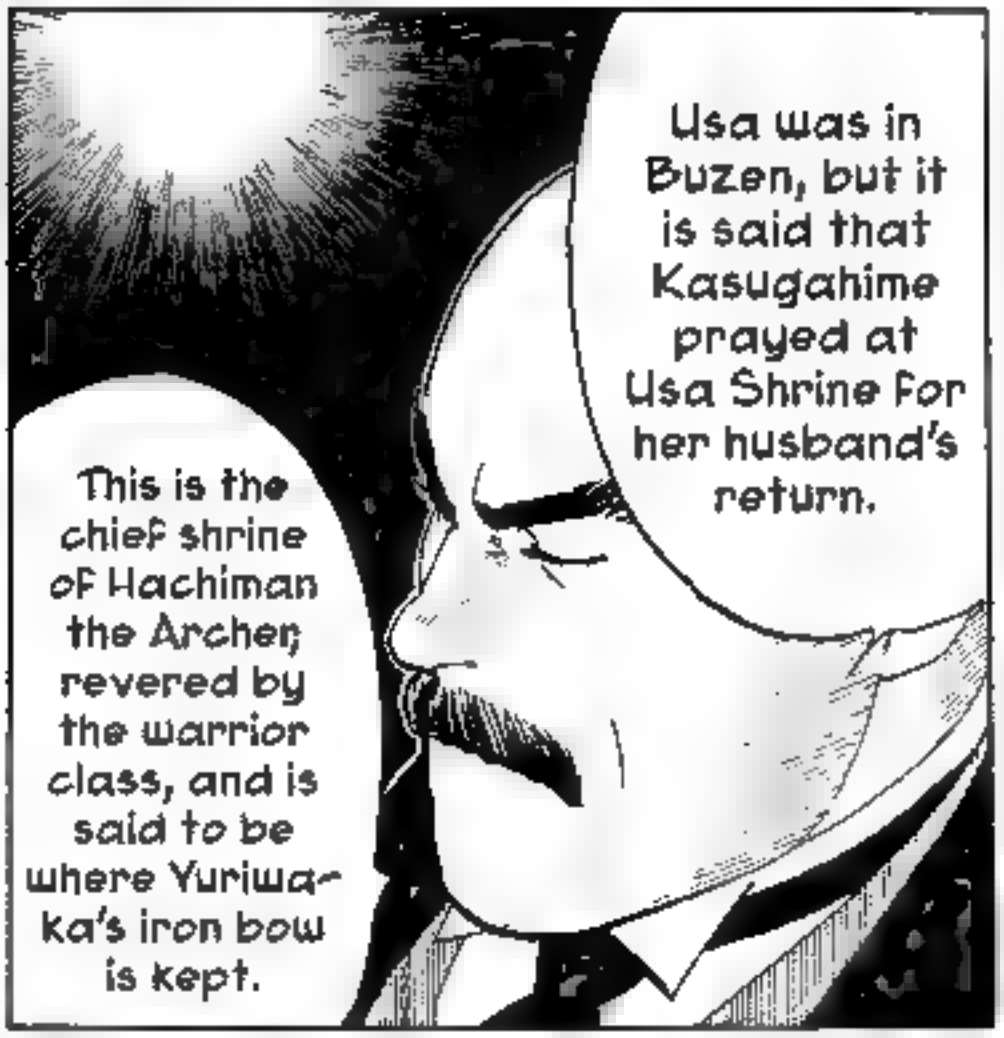
Munakata Tadakusu

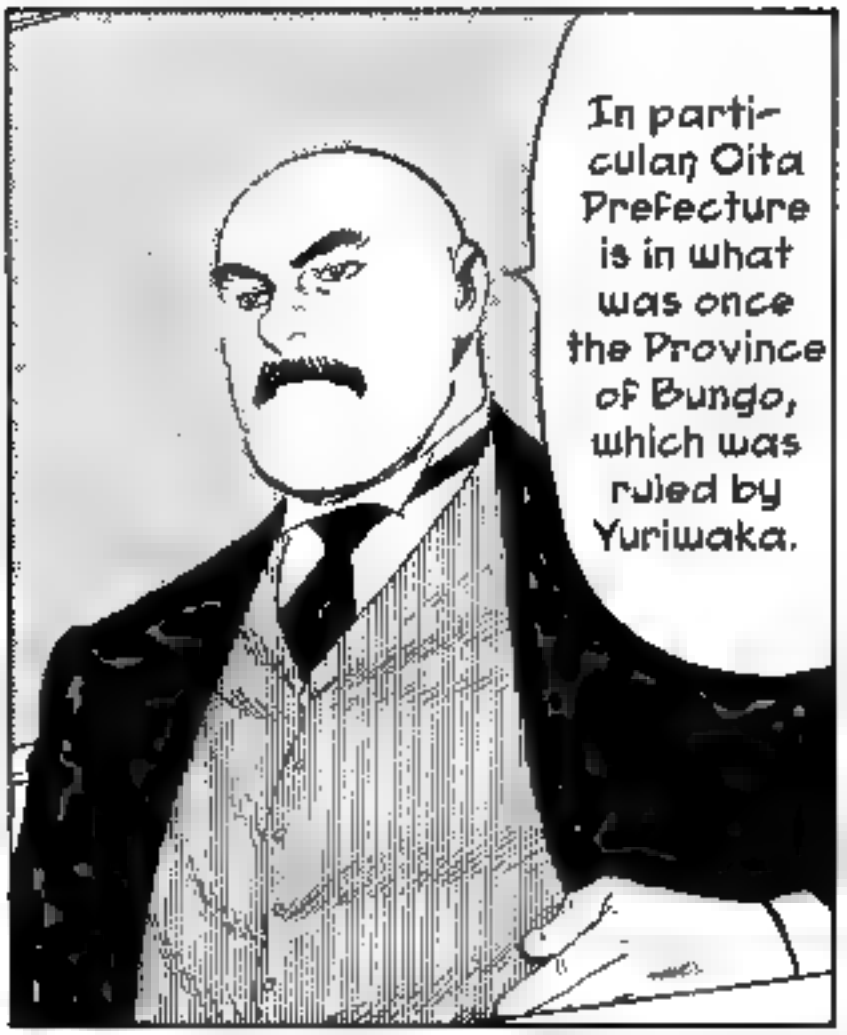
Kyushu
Usa City,
Oita Prefecture

However, while Tsubouchi Shoyo started a sensation in the Meiji Period, now he is all but forgotten

Rebuttals came one after another and fewer and fewer people came to know about the legend of Yuriwaka itself. This is nothing short of regrettable.

I hope that this lecture will be an opportunity for all of you to hear of this legend.


This is the chief shrine of Hachiman the Archer, revered by the warrior class, and is said to be where Yuriwaka's iron bow is kept.
Usa was in Buzen, but it is said that Kasugahime prayed at Usa Shrine for her husband's return.


In particular Oita Prefecture is in what was once the Province of Bungo, which was ruled by Yuriwaka.

Therefore, this land truly is deeply tied to Yuriwaka.
Meanwhile, according to the legend, the lily, or yuri, was the flower that symbolized Usa Shrine...

パチ パチ パチ パチ

and this time it's Yuriwaka. Quite inconsistent, if I say so myself...

Are you going back to Tokyo now?

I came to Oita for a lecture last year. Back then, my theme was Uryu Island...

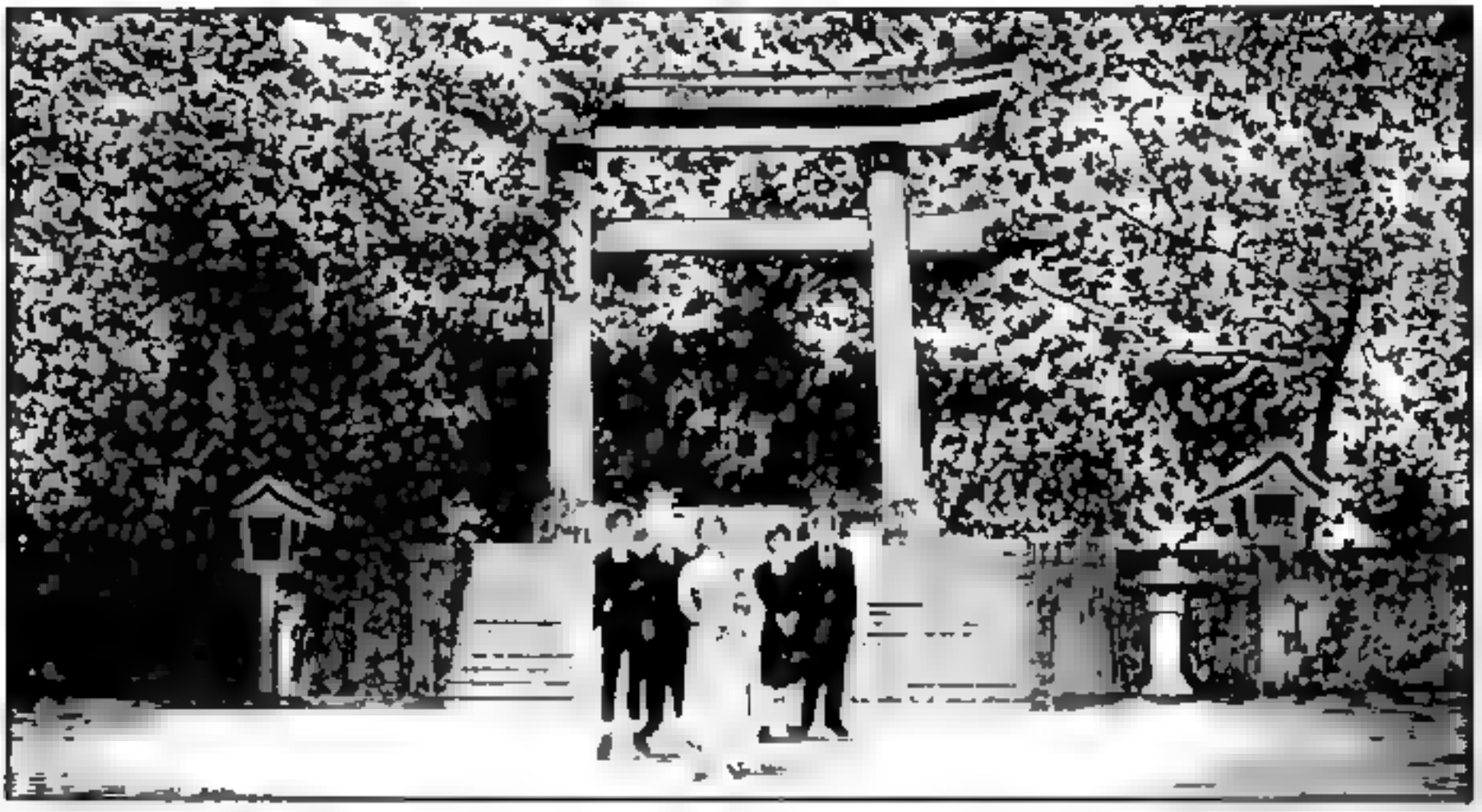
Thank you very much for the lecture, Professor Munakata.

So I thought I would stop by the shrine while I was here.

No. I just had a thought as I was talking about Usa Shrine...

Lilies ...?

Uh... Professor, these just came for you...



Thank you for your help at Kashi Shrine.
I'm very pleased to see you again, Professor Munakata.

Ama-Stella, eh... So how did you know I was coming to Usa Shrine?

I am the founder of a religious order... I heard you were giving a lecture on Yuriwaka, and I had a hunch.

You haven't brought along the employees of your foundry today, hav you?

Ms. Okinaga... You always seem to turn up in the strangest ways.

No, only the members of the Church of Ama-Stella, in name only...

A god that was later syncretized with Emperor Ojin.

Usa Shrine, with its deep connections to the legend of Yuriwaka, has the Great God Hachiman as its principal deity...

Usa Shrine
Enshrined Deities
Great God Hachiman
(Emperor Ojin)
Great God Hime
Empress Jingu

This isn't just a coincidence, is it, Professor Munakata?

Empress Jingu is tied to Greek mythology, and Yuriwaka, tied to Odysseus, is connected to the shrine of her son, Emperor Ojin...

...Ohh!

You've inferred that Empress Jingu, also known as Okinaga Tarashi-hime, the consort of Emperor Chuai and conqueror of Silla, is a fictional figure that originated from Greek myths that were passed to Japan through the SeaFolk.

Since the constellation of Queen Cassiopeia was named "The Anchor" in Japan, and anchors used to be called "tarashi", you concluded that it represented Okinaga Tarashi-hime, and therefore, so did Cassiopeia.

While their historicity is questionable, there may have been what you might call a "SeaFolk Dynasty".

And additionally, there are another five emperors with "*tarashi*" in their names, including Emperor Koan and Emperor Keiko.

"The Bow".

?

By the way, do you know what Cassiopeia was called in the age of the samurai?

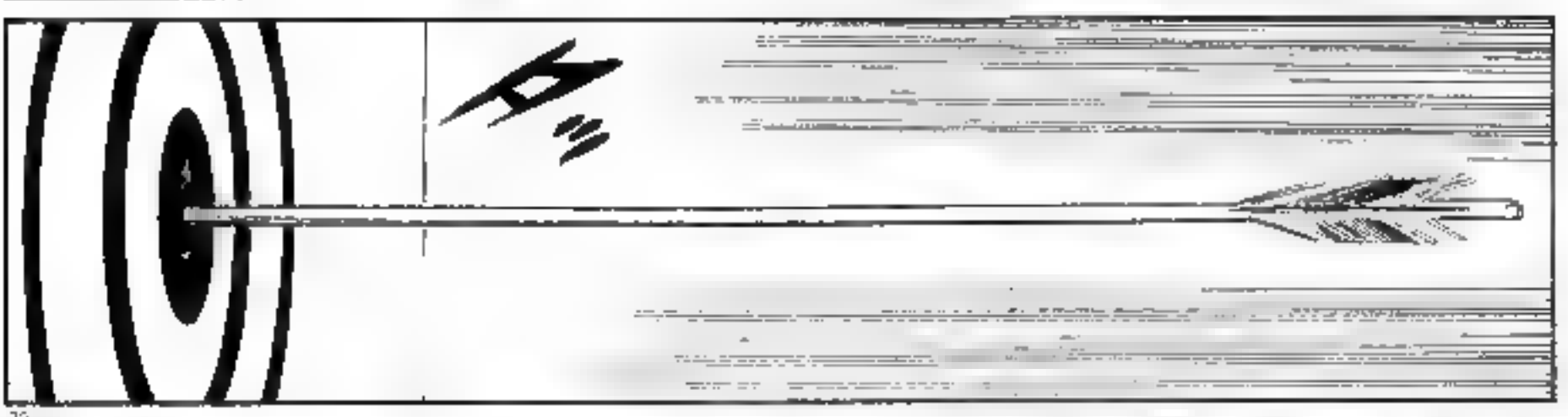
They say that when he was born, the flesh on his forearms bulged up, resembling a "*honda*".

Okinaga Tarashi-hime was the last of the SeaFolk Dynasty, and her son, Emperor Ojin, had the name of "Homuta".

The Bow!

This means that Emperor Ojin had "archery" in his name...

A "*honda*", later known as a "*tomo*", was a protector intended to keep an archer's bowstring from harming their left arm when they shot their bow.



.....

Usa Shrine may have been the bridge between these ages.

From the age of the "anchor" to the age of the "bow" ...

And there was one living witness to this change of eras...

At Kashi Shrine, where Empress Jingu was possessed and declared an invasion of Silla, and where Emperor Chuai die a sudden death,

there was one man present as the saniwa*.

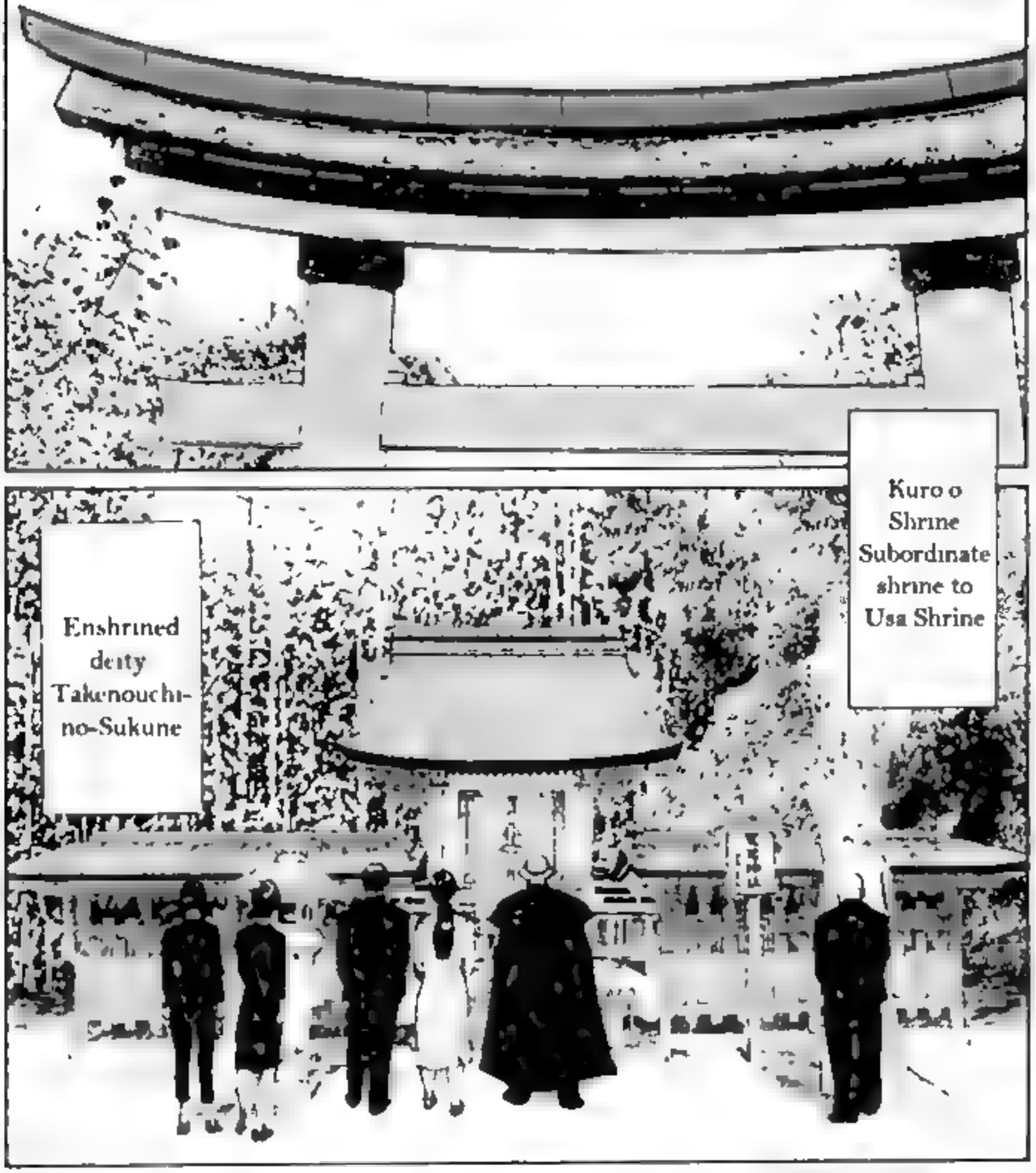
A man who laid many schemes to protect the young Emperor Ojin.

*A PERSON WHO RECEIVES ORACLES AND INTERPRETS THE WILL OF THE GODS.

Take-
nouchi-
no-
Sukune.

A minister said to be hundreds of years old, who served the Seafolk Emperors from Otarashihiko, or Emperor Keiko...

I believe that "Minister Takenouchi" was the prototype of the Japanese Odysseus, Minister Yuriwaka!


Kuro o Shrine Subordinate shrine to Usa Shrine
Enshrined deity Takenouchi-no-Sukune
Empress Jingu's minister Takenouchi-no-Sukune, is worshipped here in a part of Usa Shrine, but for some reason, it is called "Kurob", or "Black Man", Shrine, rather than Takenouchi Shrine
Kuro'o Shrine Enshrined Deity: Takenouchi-no-Sukune

By the way, Minister Yuriwaka once took on the name "Kokemaru", the moss man.

After living for two years on a desert island, with his hair grown out and his body tanned to a deep black, he certainly had the appearance his name suggested.

There are other locations that have a Kurob Shrine, but this shrine has such a negative image that it is known as the "office of thieves". How is the "black man" tied to Minister Takenouchi...?

His name certainly suggested his destiny.

Odysseus, king of Ithaca, also returned to his kingdom as a beggar; and his name means "the hated one".

On the other hand, he would entrap and slay those he did not like, even if they were his allies. His resourcefulness was sometimes referred to as foul play.

Odysseus was a resourceful general of the Greek army in the battle of Troy. It was his plan to sneak the soldiers into the castle in a wooden horse, in the guise of a token of surrender.

And Take-nouchi-no-Sukune was similarly a man who would stop at nothing.

He disarmed his entire army, feigning that they had no intent to fight, but when the opposing army did the same in relief, they drew their hidden weapons and killed them all.

In order to return Empress Jingu and her son to Nanba, where Oshiku-ma-no-Miko, who desired the imperial throne, lay in ambush, he lied and said that they had died, and returned on a false funeral boat.

And just as Odysseus, whether as retribution for his schemes or due to his name, was despised by the god of the ocean and destined to wander the sea...

Kuro'o Shrine

The Hated One, Kokemaru, Kurob... Don't you feel that these are all connected somehow?

Takenouchi-no-Sukune was later met with tribulations...

29

Hmm?

Actually, it was Kurob Shrine that I wanted to ask you about, Professor Munakata...

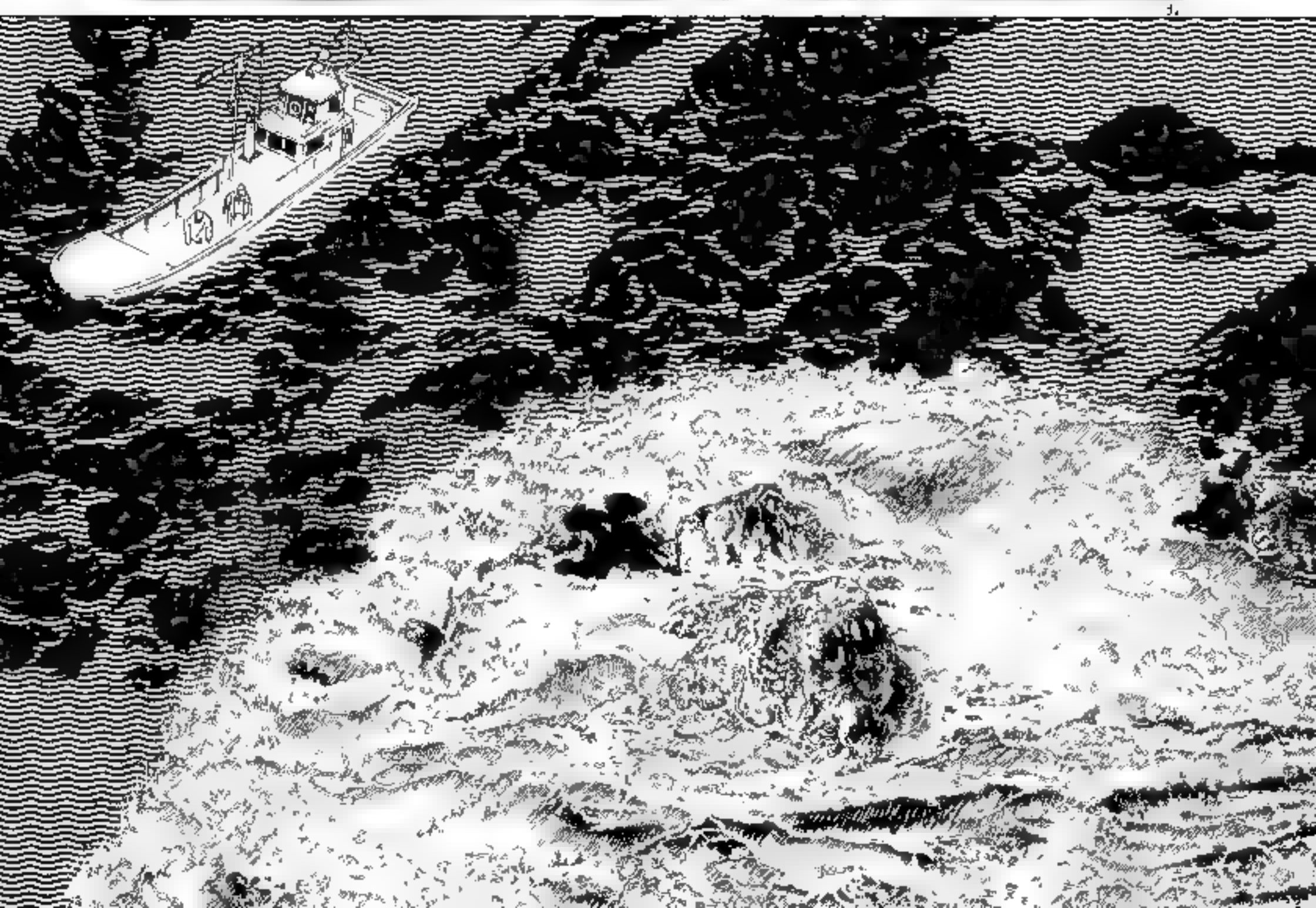
.....

Oh, you're the man that casted anchors for fishing boats.

Do you remember Mr. Furui from the foundry...? He's the man that told us that anchors used to be called "tarashi"...

Yes... And I have a lot of fisherman friends. I heard this story just about a week ago ...

A fishing boat from Kyushu was in the waters east of Tsushima, in the open ocean without a single reef in sight...



The entire reef was active, and looked like it was rising from the ocean floor.

SON KURO'O

So, the old man remembered that long ago, they say there used to be a desert island called "Take Island" in those parts.

So they were the remains of a stone torii gate with "Kurob" inscribed on it!?

Take Island ...!?

Ha-neul! Give him a proper greeting!

You seem to be doing well, Ha-neul.

Professor Munakata! I knew you would come!

How luxurious.

We've chartered this cruiser from Oita Harbor!

Morie Harbor, Kunisaki Peninsula

You never change, Omoni...

I did a little digging after hearing about Kurob Shrine, and I was surprised when I ran into Takenouchi-no-Sukune. Why would Empress Jingu's minister be worshipped in a place like that...?

And since you just happened to be in Usa, I wasted no time in chartering this ship.

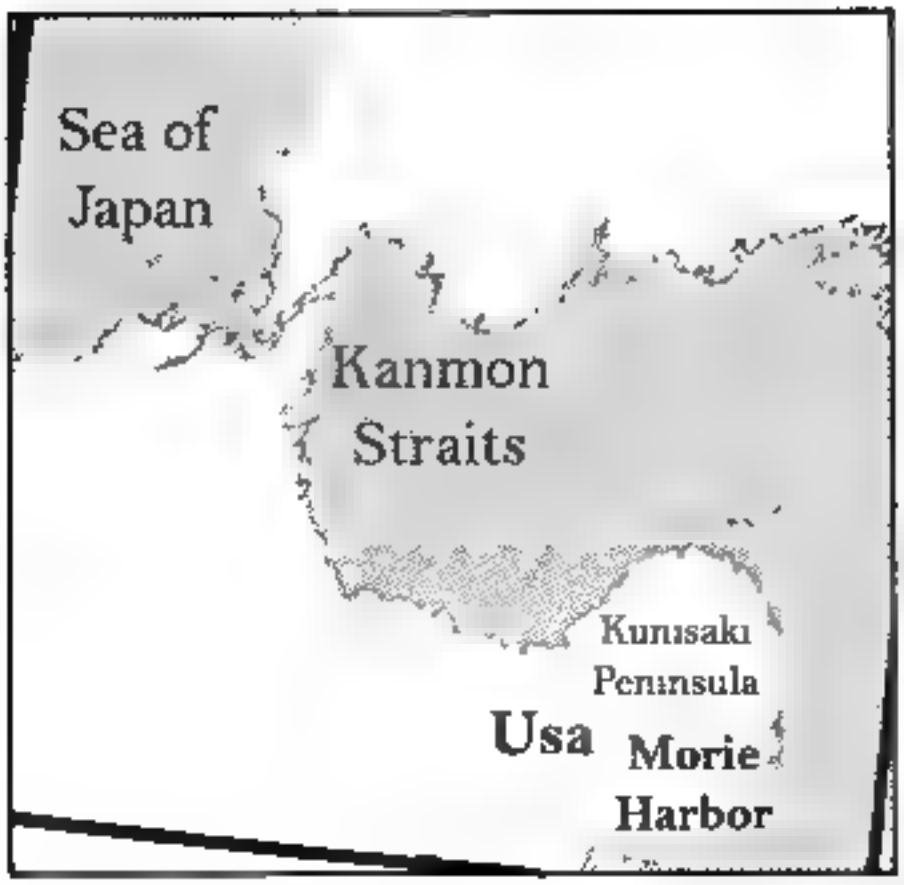
So you're saying that "Take Island", which may have sank into the sea, could be re-surfacing?

With the remains of the Kurob Shrine once built there still on it?

No rhyme or reason... But surprisingly enough, you may be close to the answer.

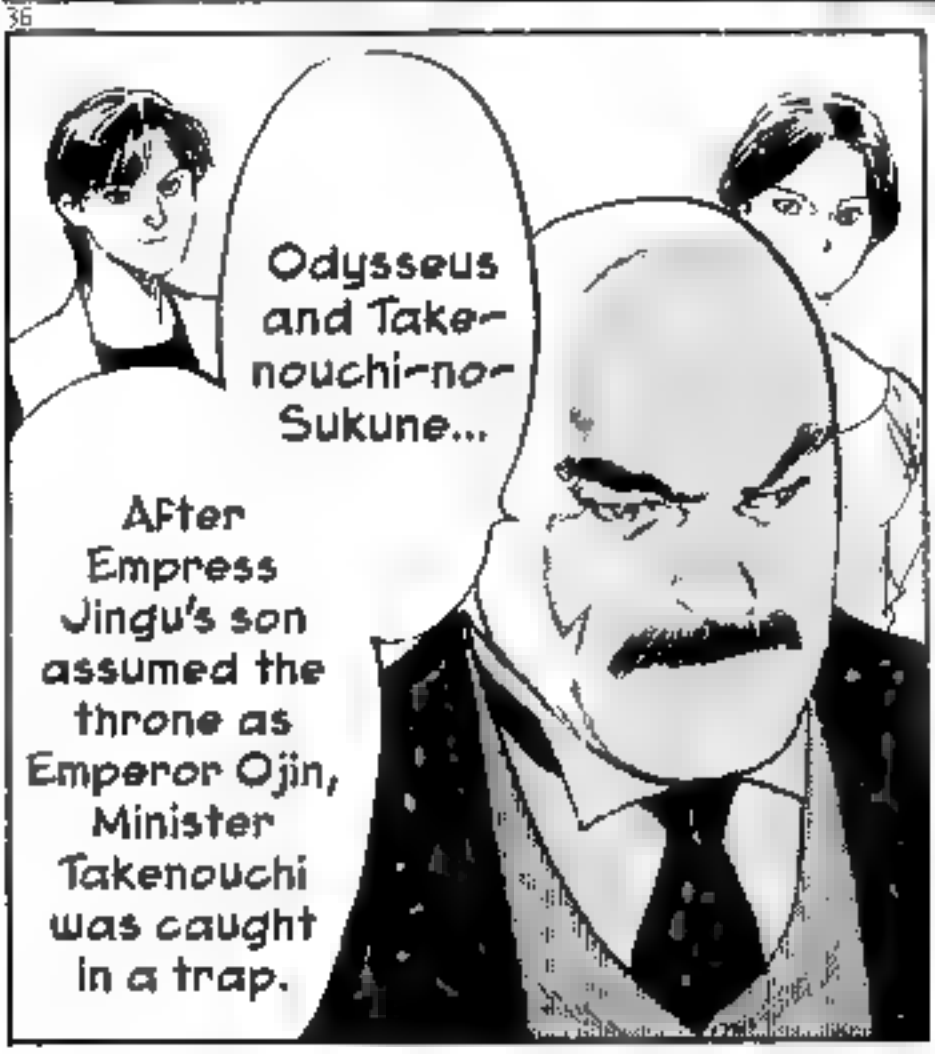
If that shrine was built in worship of Takenouchi-no-Sukune in ancient times, that means the story of Odysseus may have come there long ago.

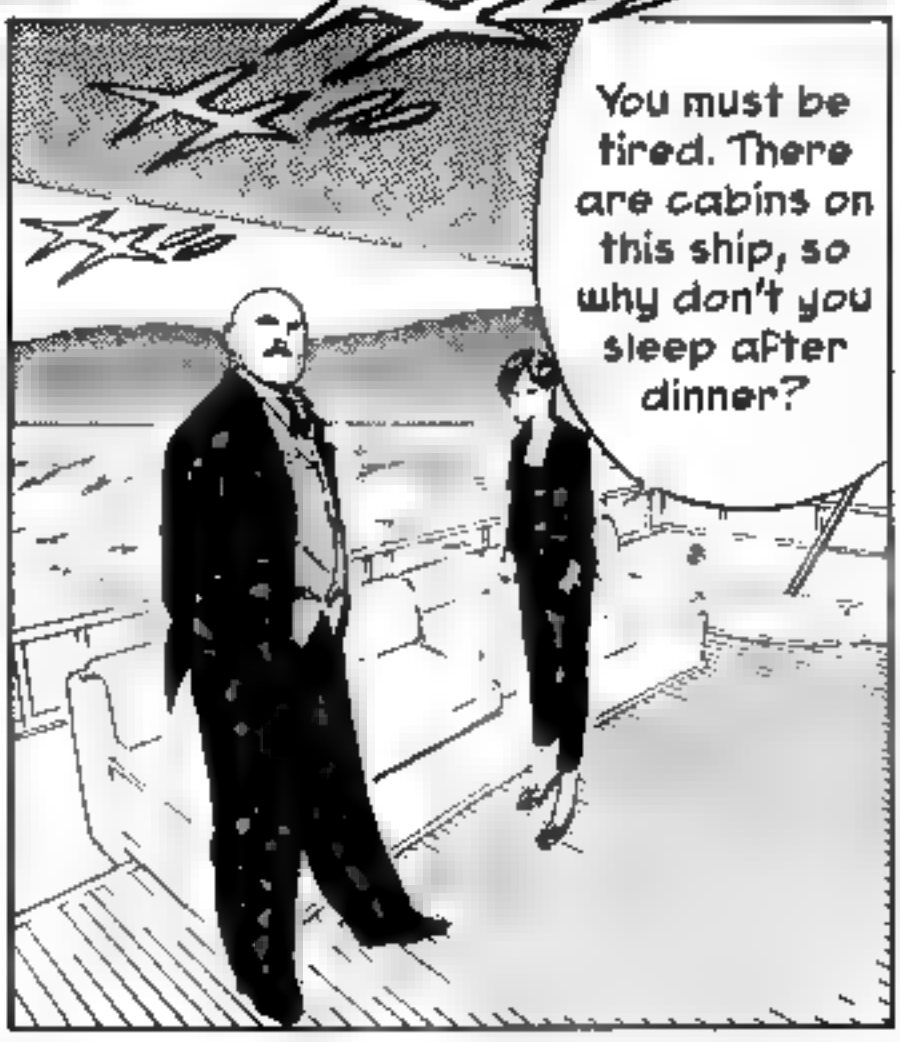
Just like the myth of Cassiopeia became the myth of Empress Jingu!


Sea of
Japan
Kanmon
Straits
Kunisaki
Peninsula
Usa
Morie
Harbor

Yes, that's exactly what I was trying to say! Good job, Professor!

We'll be going around the Kunisaki Peninsula towards the Kanmon Straits. We'll go north through the Sea of Japan, and we should reach our destination by morning.


Odysseus and Take-nouchi-no-Sukune...
After Empress Jingu's son assumed the throne as Emperor Ojin, Minister Takenouchi was caught in a trap.


You must be tired. There are cabins on this ship, so why don't you sleep after dinner?

And it came from the slander of his brother, Umashi-uchi-no-Sukune.

He accused Takenouchi-no-Sukune, who had been dispatched to Kyushu, of plotting to conquer the West, and eventually the nation, and brought the charges before the Emperor

Emperor Ojin was infuriated, and ordered Takenouchi to be put to death.

But in Kyushu, a man by the name of Maneko, who looked exactly like Takenouchi-no-Sukune, took his place, and allowed the Minister to escape to sea.

While Takenouchi's death was being reported, he secretly sailed back via the Pacific, landing in Ki and reaching the Imperial Court

He confronted his brother Umashiuchi and proved his innocence... He attempted to slay his brother, but he was pardoned by the Emperor's intervention.

This episode is somewhat similar to the story of Empress Jingu and her son's return to Kyushu.

This is similar to his scheme of faking the Empress' death in the Kojiki.

In the Nihon Shoki, Empress Jingu catches wind of the ambush, and charges Takenouchi-no-Sukune with protecting the Prince. They land in Kii via the Pacific... going by the exact same route.

This means... that there may have been elements that were separated from what was originally the story of Takenouchi-no-Sukune, and incorporated into the myth of Empress Jingu.

The "Taiheiki" says that prior to Empress Jingu's attack on Silla, she requested the aid of all the gods in Japan, but only one god of the sea did not come to her call.

When the ancestral god of the Azumi Seafolk, "Isora", finally arrived, he came in a bizarre appearance, covered in seaweed and insects.

In return, he came presenting the "Kanju and Manju", which could control the tides at will, which he had borrowed from the Dragon Palace.

This allowed Empress Jingu to trifle with the army of Silla, and seize victory.

Or perhaps the story of Isora was passed down through Take-nouchi-no-Sukune.

I have a feeling that this Isora was included in the story of Takenouchi-no-Sukune.

A bizarre man that returns from the sea for revenge...

These were the "Kurob"...

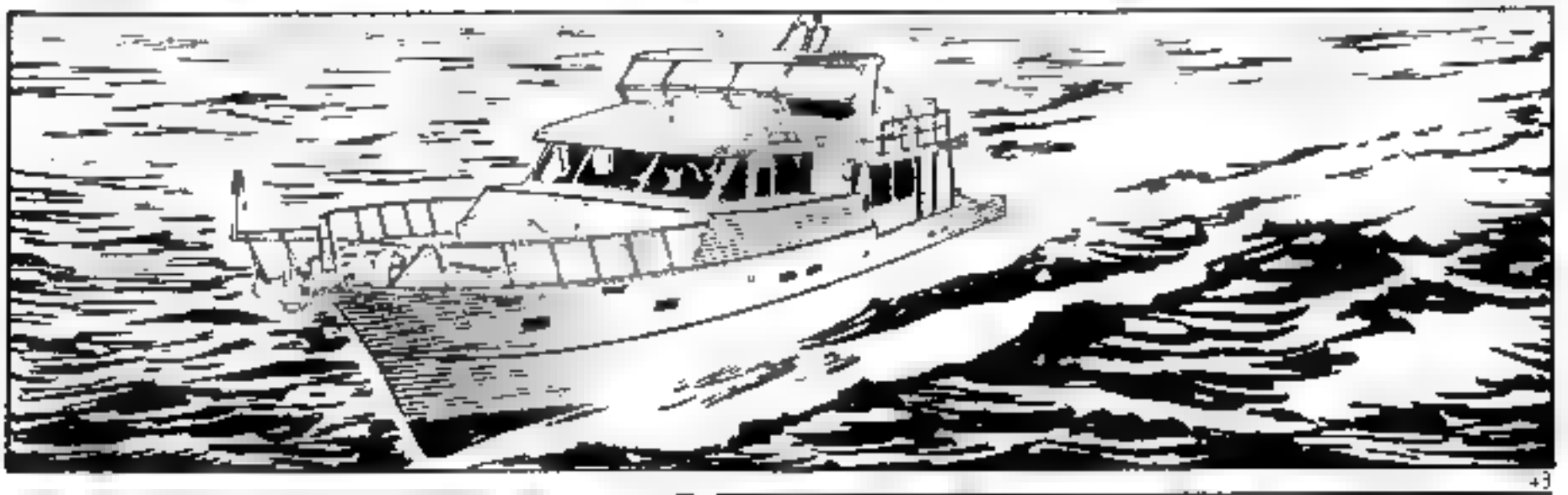
Odysseus the Hated's beggar...

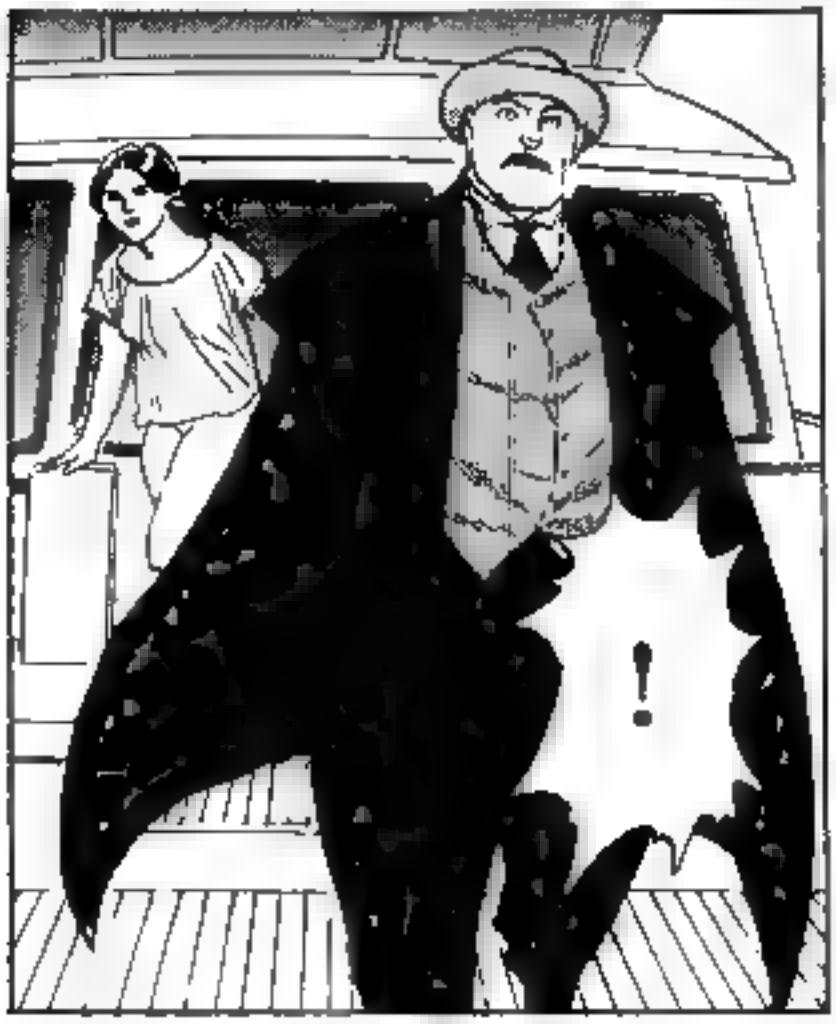
Yuriwaka's "Kokemaru" ...

After the defeat of Silla, Empress Jingu returned the Manju and Kanju to the sea .

These became two small islands in the Kanmon Straits.

Kanmon Straits
Manju Island and
Kanju Island




!

We're almost there. The radar says it's a little too big for a reef, though...

Take Island... Has it completely become an island...!?

44

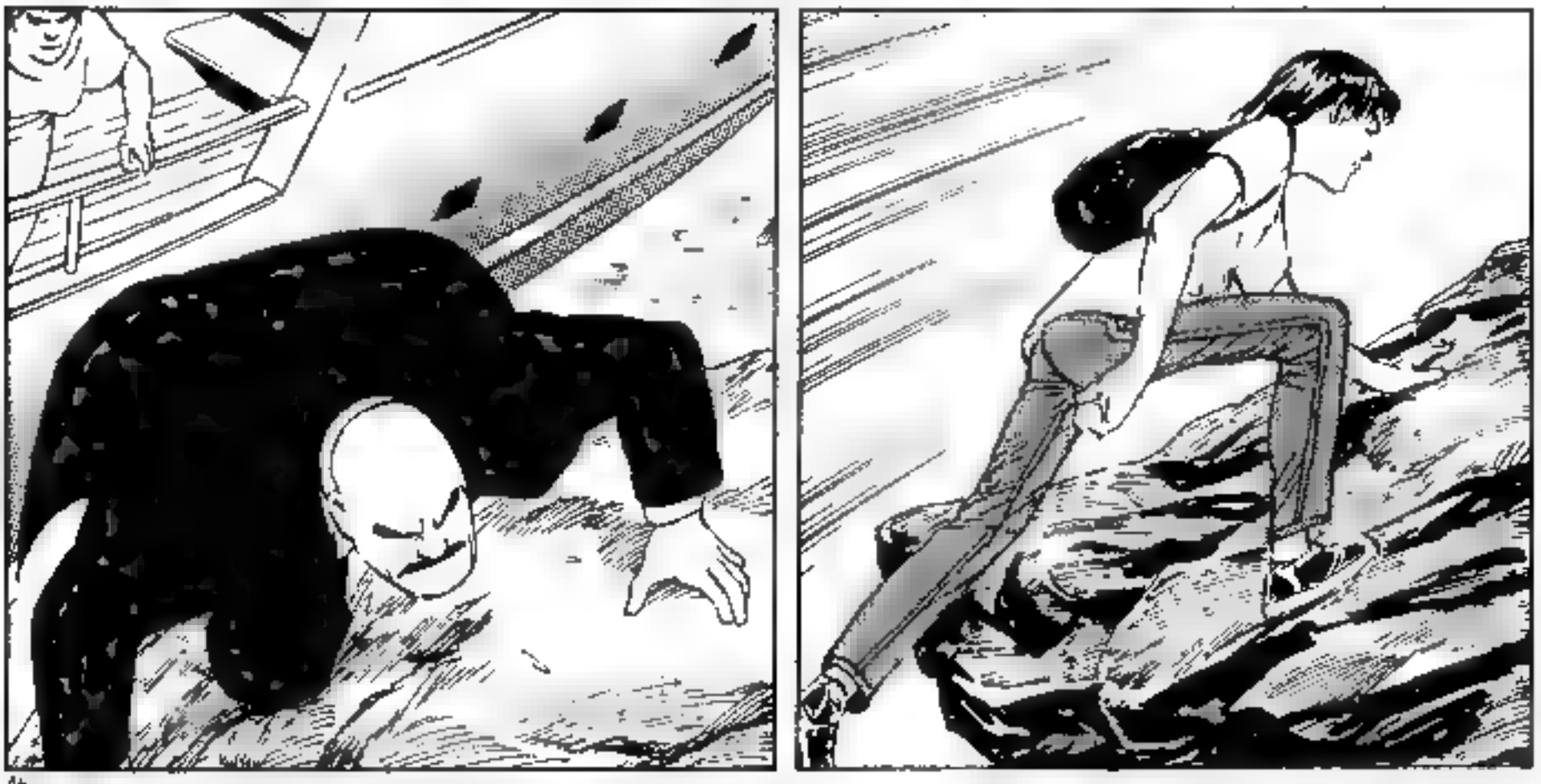
THIS ISLAND JUST SUDDENLY SURFACED TWO OR THREE DAYS AGO. CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT?

ARE YOU A JAPANESE SHIP!? THE MORE OF US THERE ARE, THE BETTER!

CAN YOU ANCHOR THE SHIP SOME-WHERE UNDER THERE!?

Y... YOU'RE GOING TO LAND!?

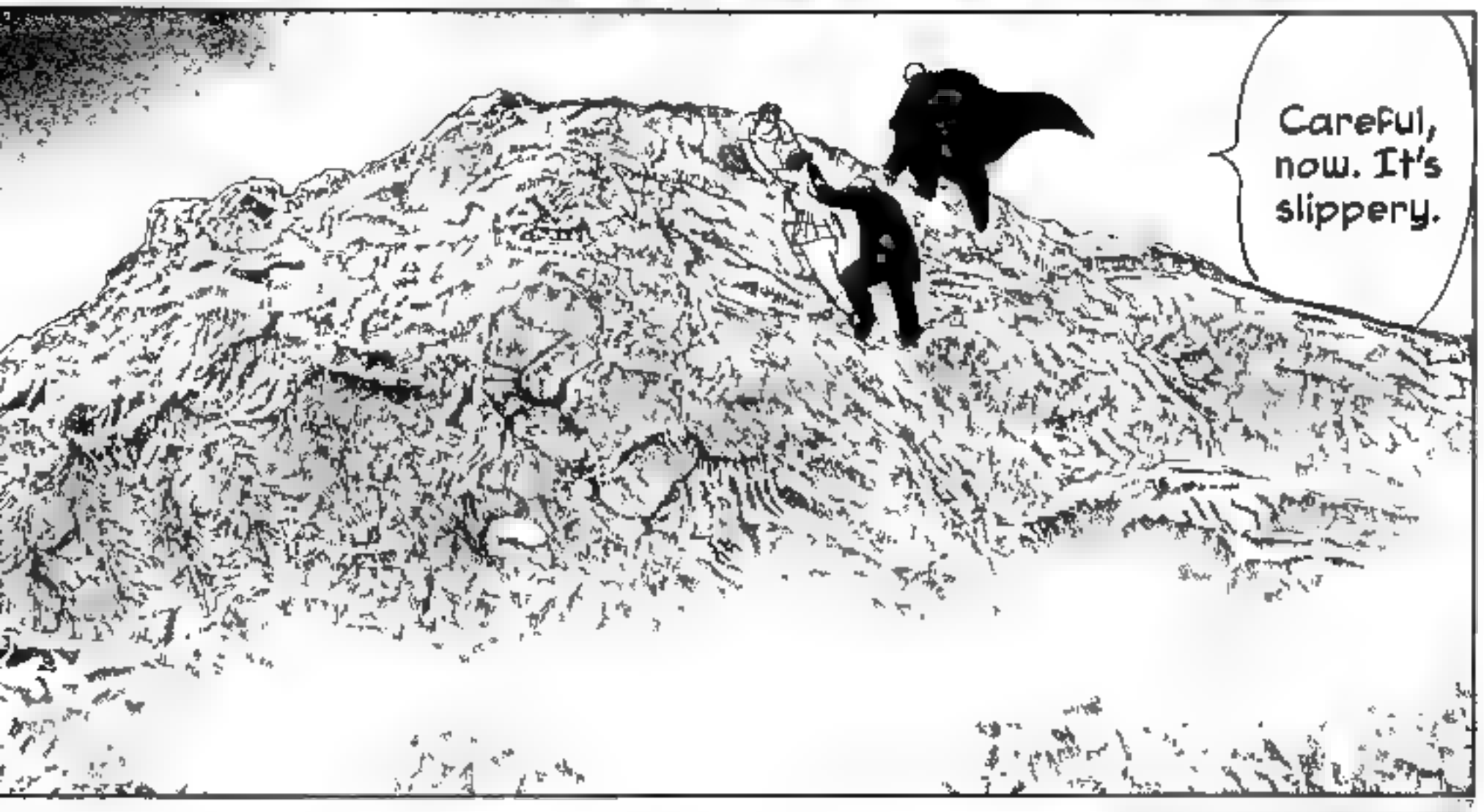
WE CAN'T COME ANY CLOSER. THE WAVES ARE TAME FOR NOW, BUT WHO KNOWS HOW LONG THAT'LL LAST...



46

TRY TELLING THAT TO EMPRESS JINGU!
M...MS. OKINAGA, NO!! IT'S TOO DANGER-OUS FOR WOMEN!

MS. OKI-NAGA !?


Careful, now. It's slippery.

This'll get serious...

N... No wonder the fishing boats from Kyushu were out there so long... The Korean ships have caught wind of this, too.

.....

So this was a *torii* gate, after all... There seems to have been a small shrine here. It sunk into the sea centuries ago, and now only traces of it remain.

SIGN: KURO'O SHRINE

But why would there be a "Kurob Shrine" on a desert island in the middle of the ocean...?

WATCH OUT!

AHHH ...

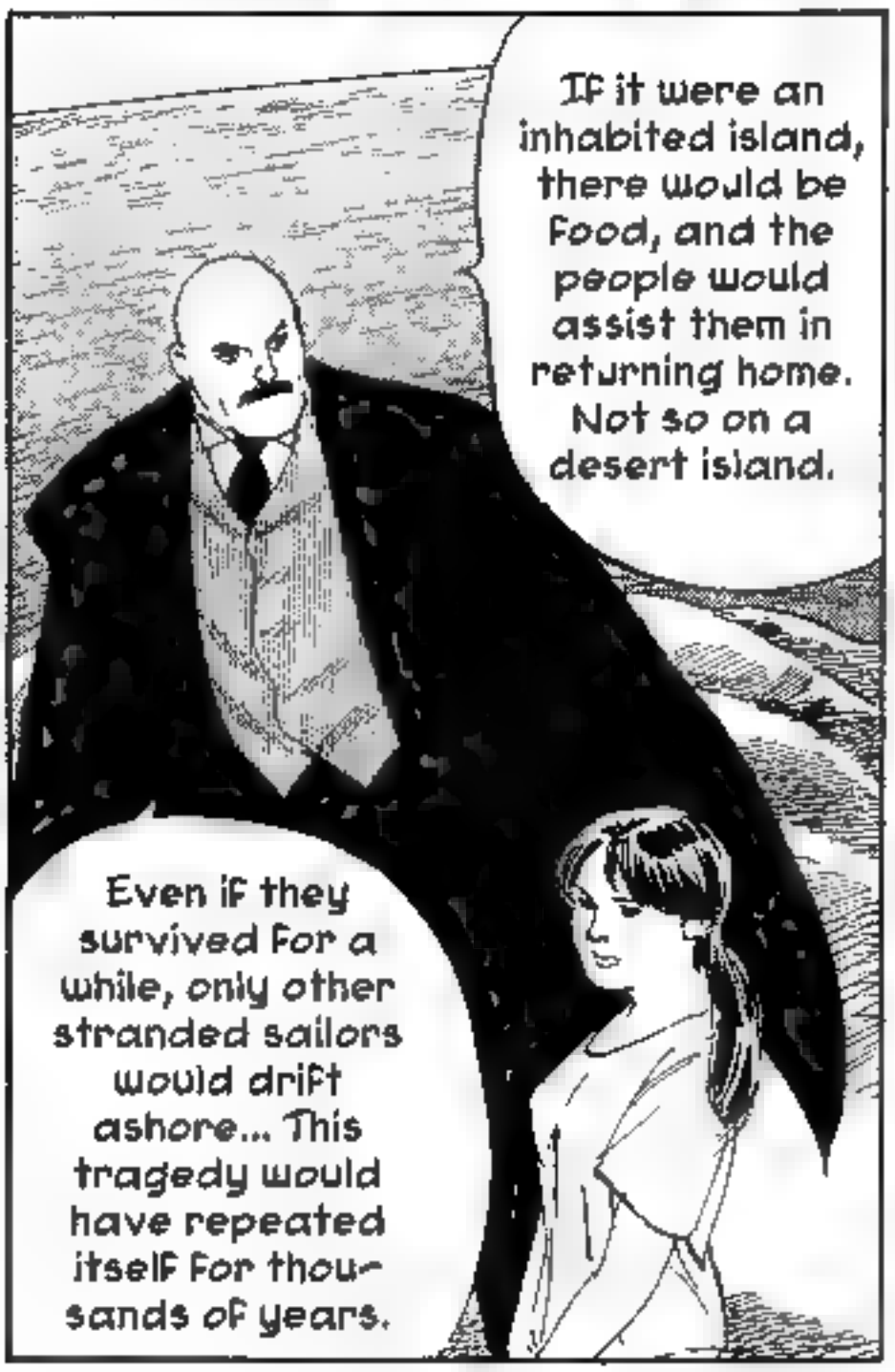
There's no casket or anything... This corpse was buried between the ledges, exposed to the elements, most likely after the shrine was built.

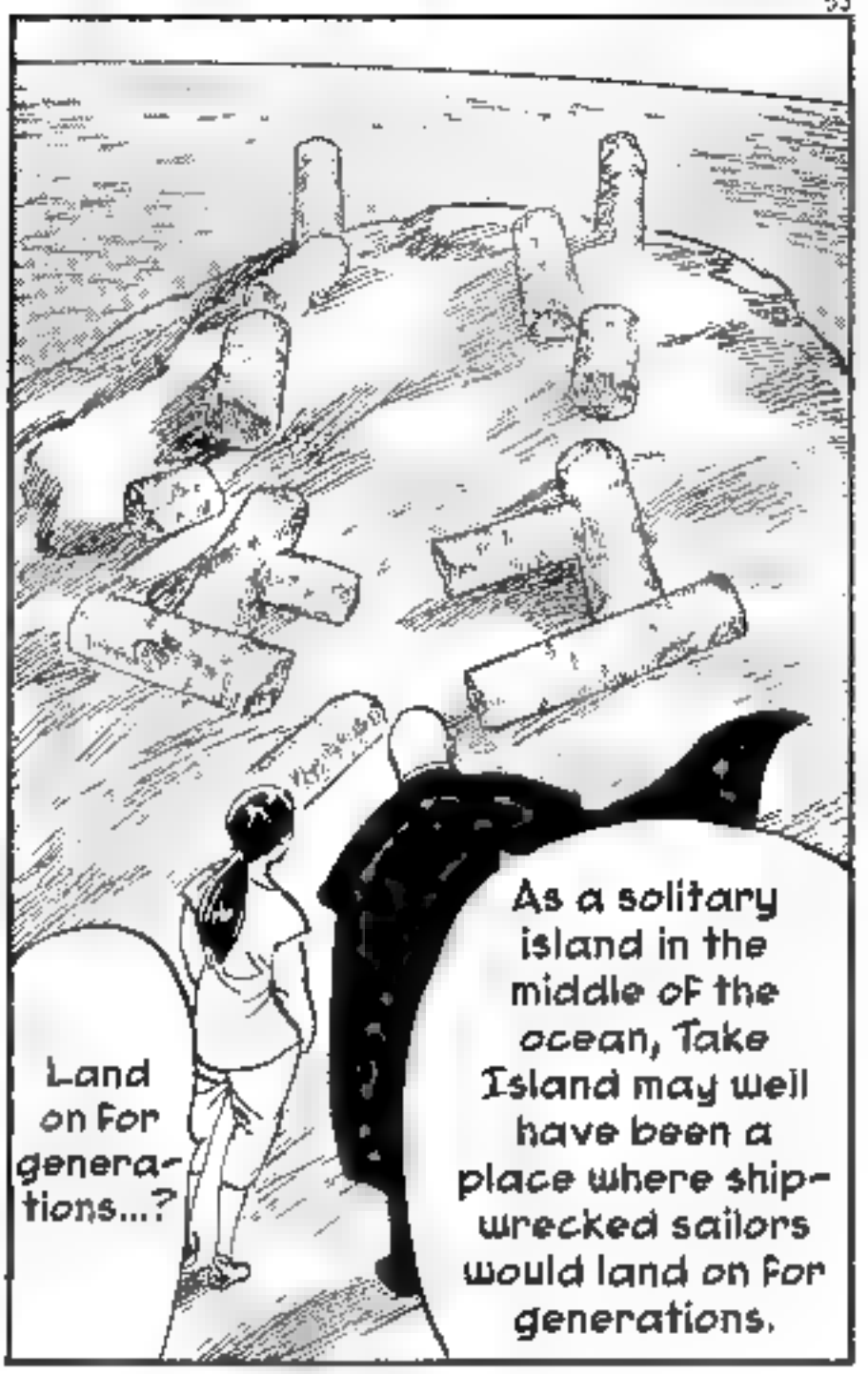
W...Who is this? These bones are so black... Could it have been the "Kurob" they worshipped...!?

Afraid not..

Was this person Japanese, or Korean ...?
So maybe it was a sailor that drifted here...?

53


If it were an inhabited island, there would be food, and the people would assist them in returning home. Not so on a desert island.
Even if they survived for a while, only other stranded sailors would drift ashore... This tragedy would have repeated itself for thousands of years.


Land on for generations...?
As a solitary island in the middle of the ocean, Take Island may well have been a place where shipwrecked sailors would land on for generations.

The number of people who died without leaving any records would have been innumerable.

Take someplace like Tori Island in Izu. There were at least ten people stranded there in Edo-period records alone, and nearly a hundred in total.

If the ancient SeaFolk did hear the story of Odysseus, they would have sympathized with the story of the shipwrecked sailor that eventually returns home.

was most likely built by people who returned from this island alive... To comfort the souls of the dead, and to bring hope to those who were stranded here after them...

The shrine worshipping Odysseus, King of Ithaca, as Minister Takenouchi of Take Island... the "Black Man"...

ゴゴゴゴ

ゴゴゴゴ

T...THIS ISN'T GOOD! WE SHOULD GET BACK TO THE SHIP!

56

W-WAIT, PROFESSOR! WE CAN'T LEAVE THE ISLAND YET!!

LET'S GO WHILE WE STILL CAN!

W... What are you thinking, Furui!?

IF WE LEAVE, THE KOREAN FISHERS WILL LAND ON THIS ISLAND! THEY'LL TAKE THIS ISLAND FROM US!!

CALL MORE REINFORCE-MENTS! WHO KNOWS WHEN THEY'LL APPROACH THE SHORE... WE'VE GOT OUR HANDS FULL KEEPING THEM IN CHECK!

IF THEY TAKE THAT ISLAND, THEY'LL CLAIM THE FISHING RIGHTS TO THE OCEAN SURROUNDING IT!!

I HEARD ABOUT THIS FROM THE FISHERS!

The captain says that Take Island is right on the border of Japan's waters.

If they claim this, they'll put a hole in Japanese territory!

Territorial Waters

Contiguous Zone

Exclusive Economic Zone

South Korea

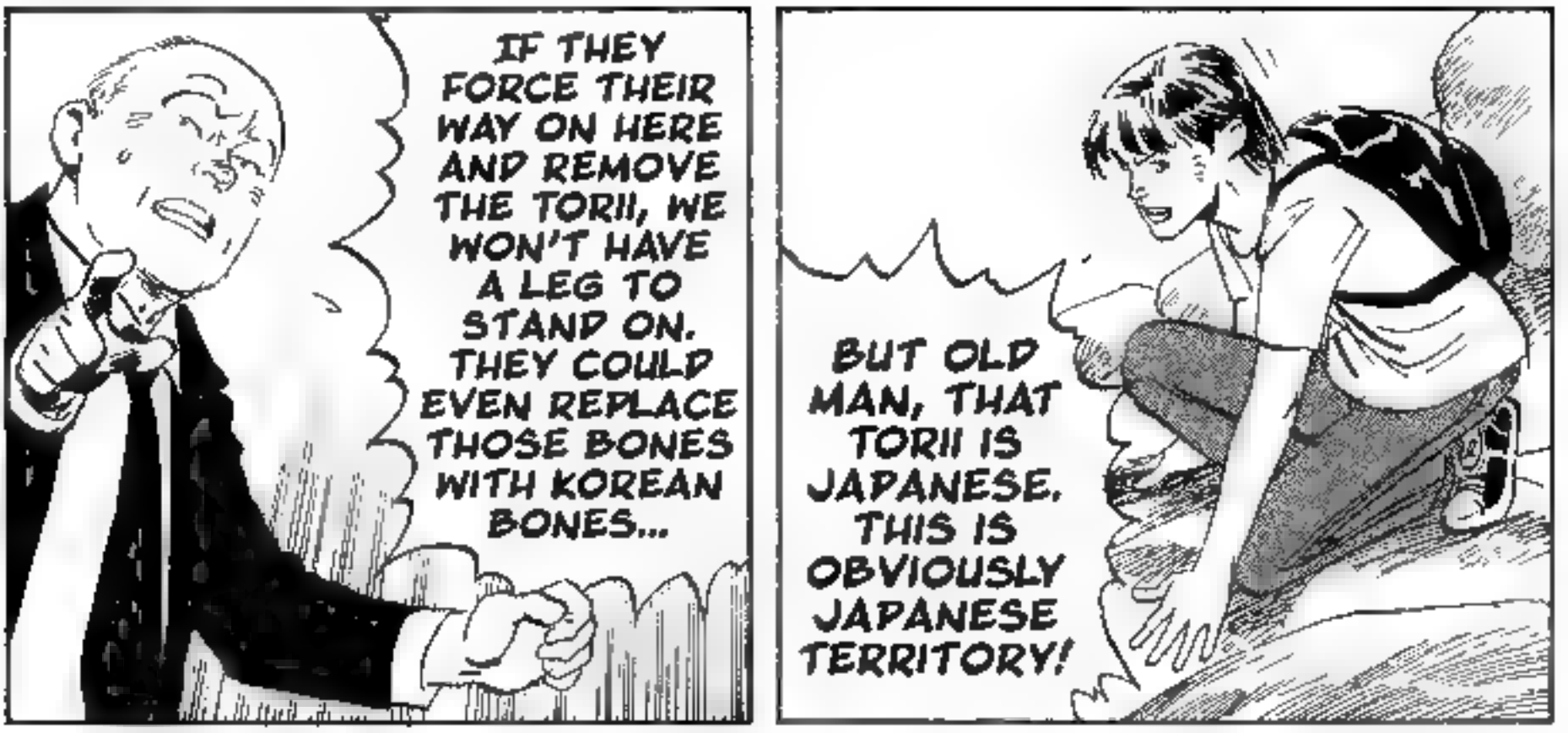
Takeshima Island

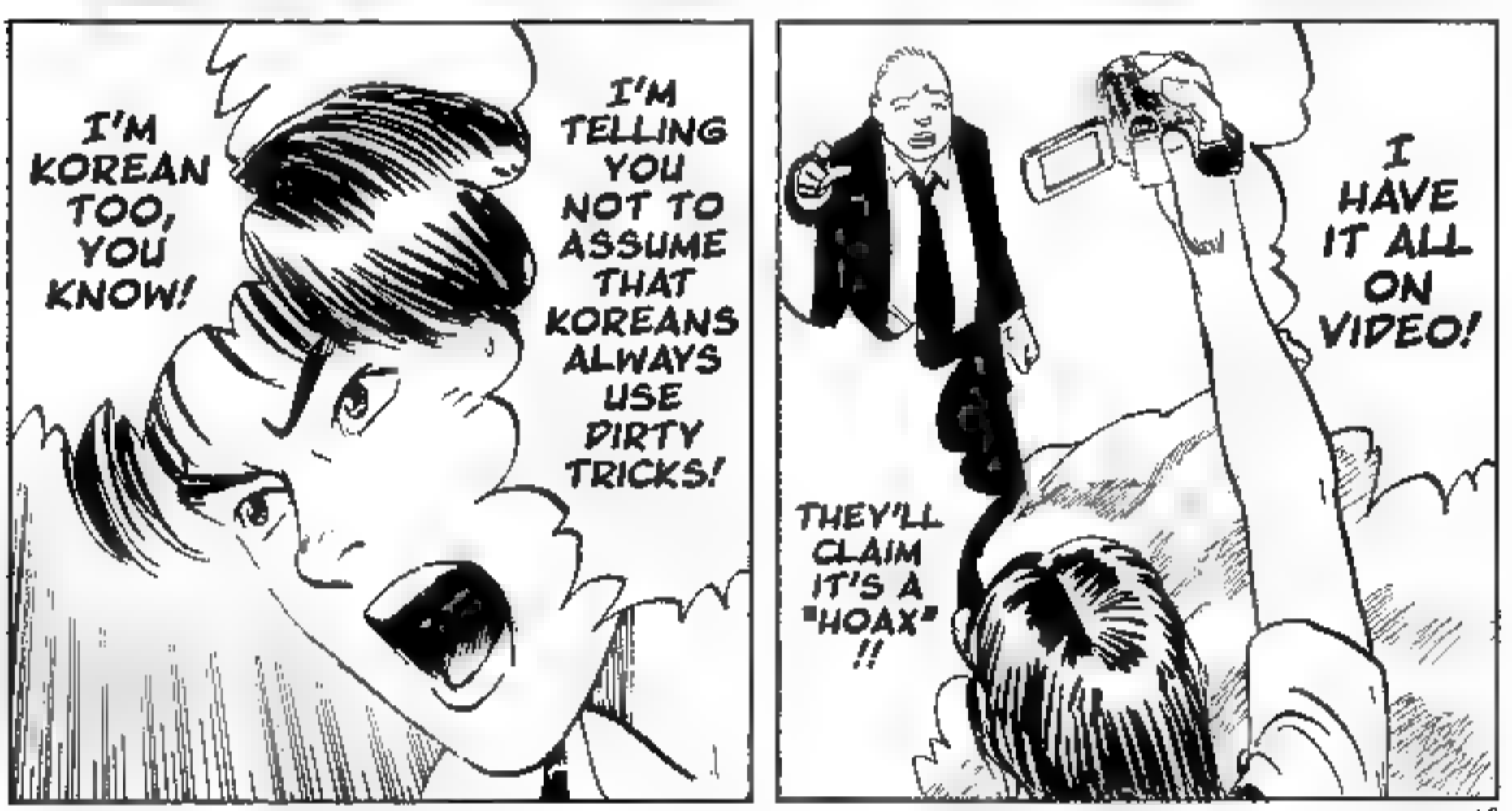
Take Island?

So the same problem as with "Takeshima Island" will break out...!?

Having lost the initiative, Japan appealed to the ruling of the International Court of Justice, but South Korea would not respond

The deserted island of Takeshima, affiliated with Shimane Prefecture, had been occupied by a South Korean garrison since 1952, issuing propaganda that it was Korean territory


IF THEY FORCE THEIR WAY ON HERE AND REMOVE THE TORII, WE WON'T HAVE A LEG TO STAND ON. THEY COULD EVEN REPLACE THOSE BONES WITH KOREAN BONES...
BUT OLD MAN, THAT TORII IS JAPANESE. THIS IS OBVIOUSLY JAPANESE TERRITORY!


I'M KOREAN TOO, YOU KNOW!
I'M TELLING YOU NOT TO ASSUME THAT KOREANS ALWAYS USE DIRTY TRICKS!
I HAVE IT ALL ON VIDEO!
THEY'LL CLAIM IT'S A "HOAX" !!

YOU'RE NOT GETTING NEAR THE ISLAND! WE'LL STOP YOU FROM LANDING, WHATEVER IT TAKES!!

げんかい

I PRAYED THAT IT WOULDN'T COME TO THIS...!!
STOP THIS AT ONCE, HA-NEUL!

섬으로부터 나가라
일본인

GET OFF THE ISLAND, JAPANESE!

한반도에 가까운 이 섬을
일본의 것과는 말아게
하지 않아

THIS ISLAND IS CLOSE TO THE KOREAN PENINSULA! WE WON'T LET YOU CLAIM IT AS PART OF JAPAN!

62

거짓말이다
일본인을 신용하지
말아라

THEY'RE LYING! DON'T TRUST THE JAPANESE!

W...WAIT! WE DON'T WANT TO FIGHT OVER THIS. WE'RE JUST HERE FOR AN ACADEMIC STUDY!

일본이 것과는 말하거
하지 않는다

WE ONLY CAME FOR AN ACADEMIC STUDY!

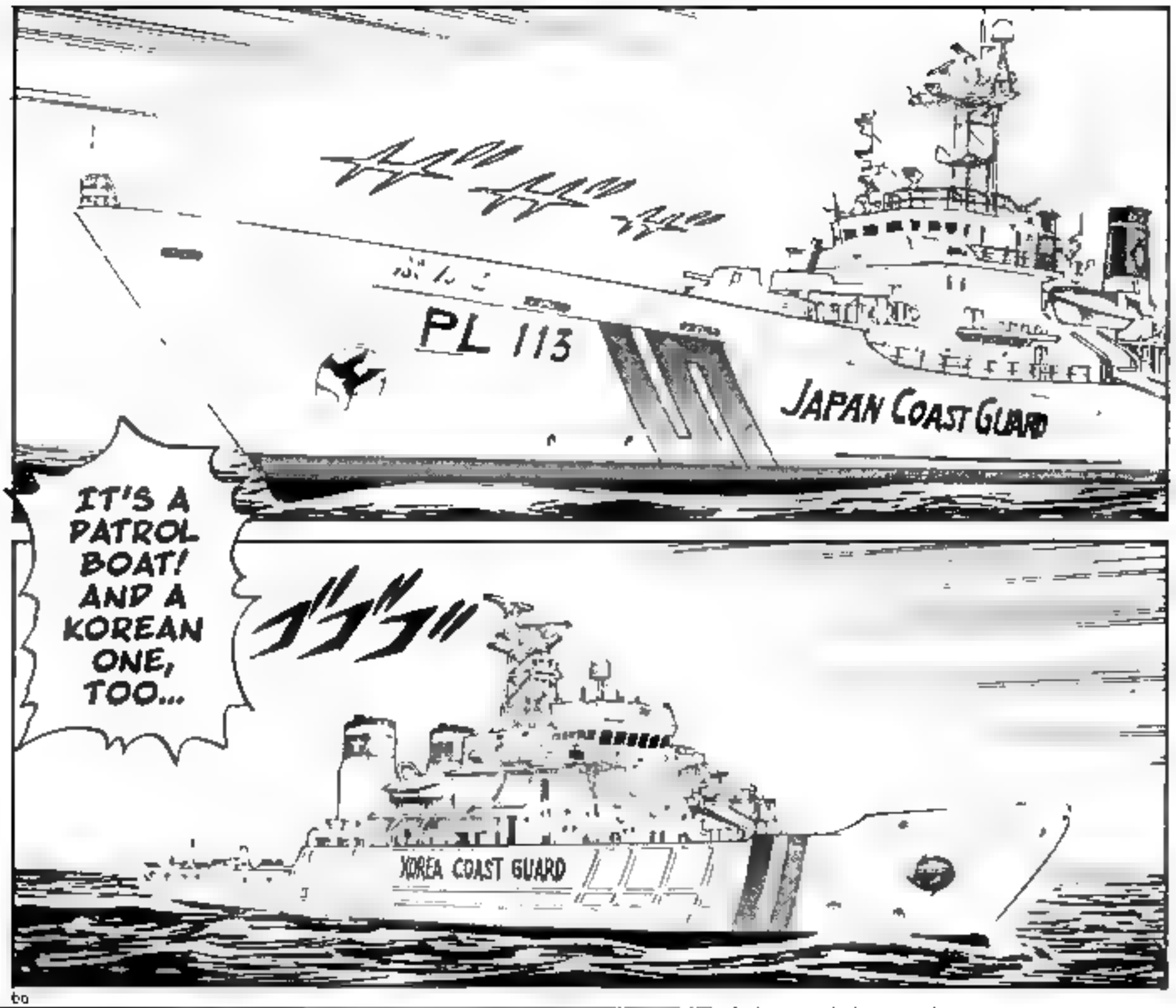
TELL THEM THAT THIS ISLAND'S DAN-GEROUS! THEY'D BETTER GET OFF OF HERE!

이 섬은 위험하다

도망쳐라

TOLD YOU, THIS IS AN ACADEMIC STUDY! I'M A UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR, YOU KNOW!

OLD MAN !!
URRR KKKK KCH ...!!
HA- NEUL !!


PL 113
JAPAN COAST GUARD
IT'S A PATROL BOAT! AND A KOREAN ONE, TOO...
KOREA COAST GUARD

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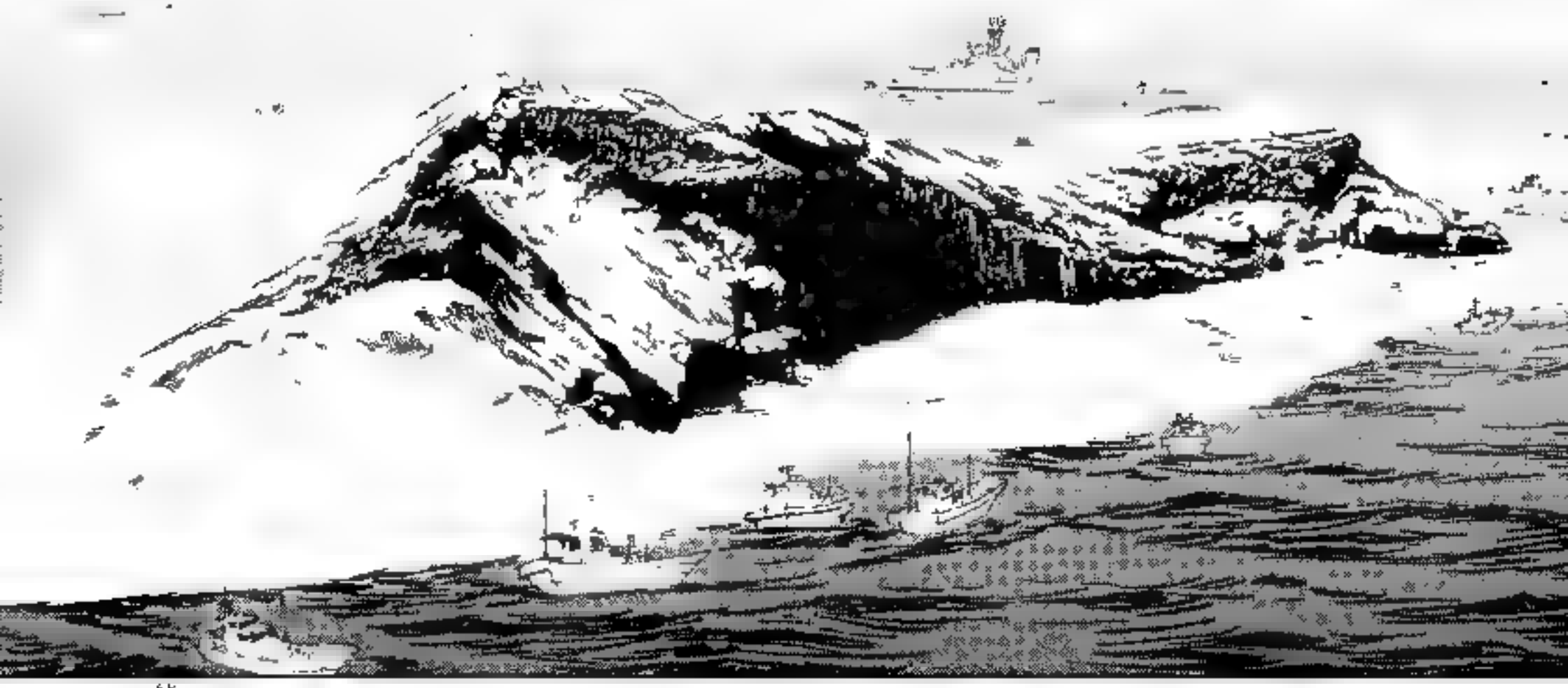
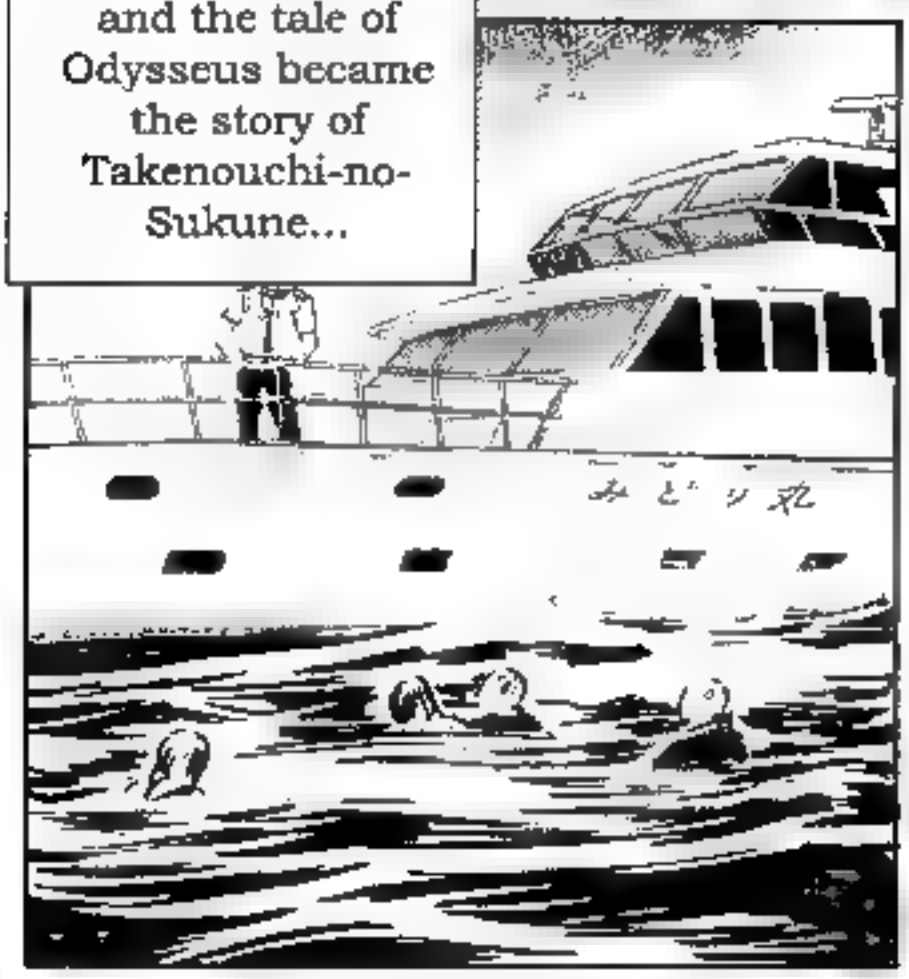


If the myth of Cassiopeia crossed the ancient sea and became the myth of Empress Jingu, and the tale of Odysseus became the story of Takenouchi-no-Sukune...



However, we cannot conclude that "Takenouchi" came to be known by the name of "Yuriwaka" to coincide with the Latin name "Ulysses"

then it would not be strange to hear stories in which Minister Takenouchi, who accompanied the Empress in her conquest of Silla, lived for centuries afterwards and continued fighting Silla and Mongolia.

But at about that time...

The Legend of "Yuriwaka" came into existence in the 16th Century at the very latest, and it is difficult to believe that his Latin name would have reached Japan before then.

And that among the feudal lords that fervently accepted them were the Otomo Clan

We know that Francis Xavier and other Portuguese missionaries landed in Tanegashima and Kyushu, bringing Christianity and other elements of Western culture.

Bungo was the land where Otomo Sorin invited in the products of Western culture on the lost island of Uryu Island... It also had deep ties to Empress Jingu, through Usa, and the people would have been familiar with the legend of Minister Takenouchi.

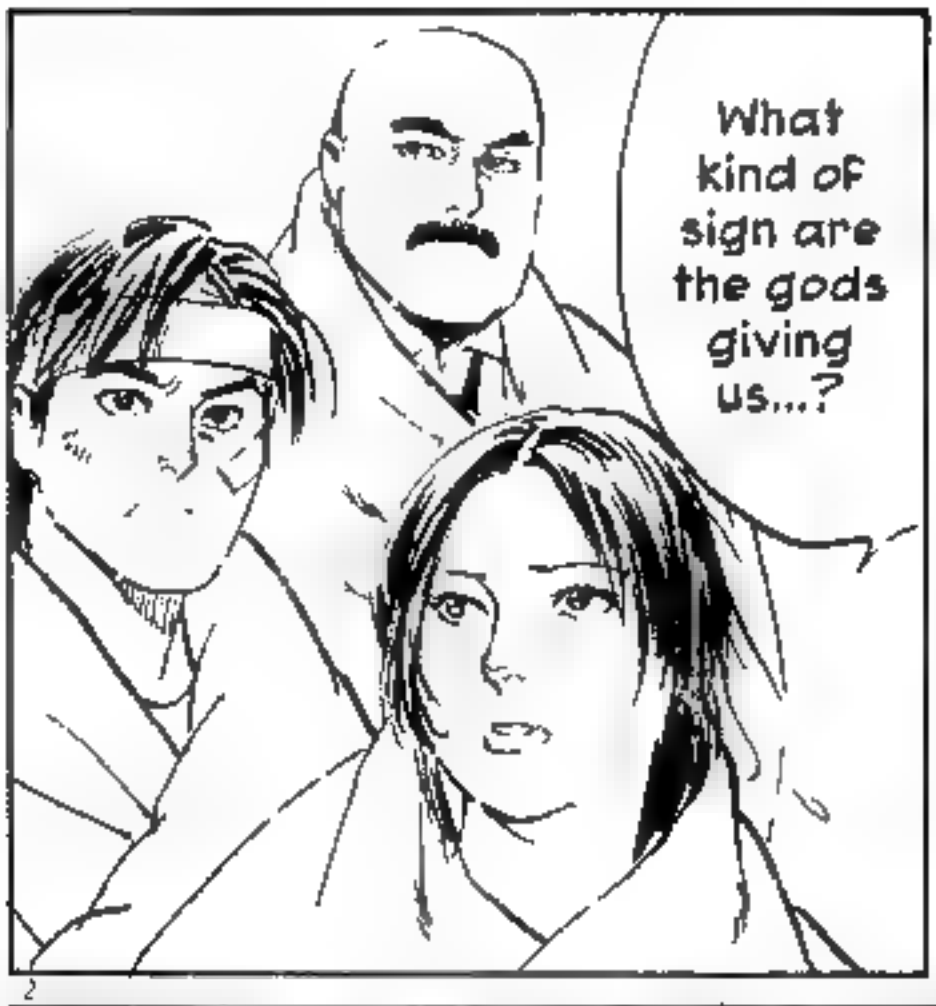
There is a possibility that they were the first to hear the story of "Ulysses"... And due to their similarity, they may have changed it to "Yuriwaka".

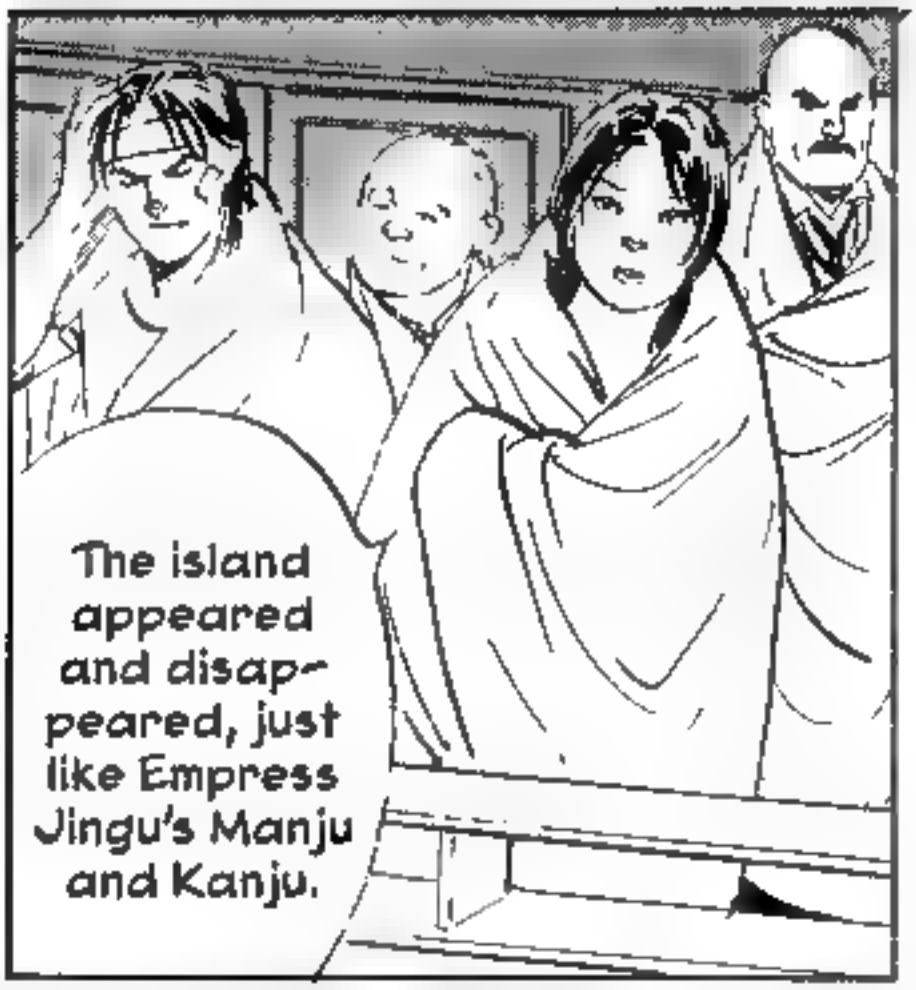
And the province Yuriwaka was said to rule over was none other than Bungo.

The mystery still lived on.

And because Kyushu was a borderland facing the Korean peninsula where the army passed through time and time again....

the legend lived on, and will continue to live on.


What kind of sign are the gods giving us...?


The island appeared and disappeared, just like Empress Jingu's Manju and Kanju.

2

THE OAKE RECORD OF PROFESSOR MUNAKATA

CHAPTER 31

PRESENTED BY

HOKUTO NO GUN

TRANSLATED BY

SYSTEMATICCHAOS

EDITING BY

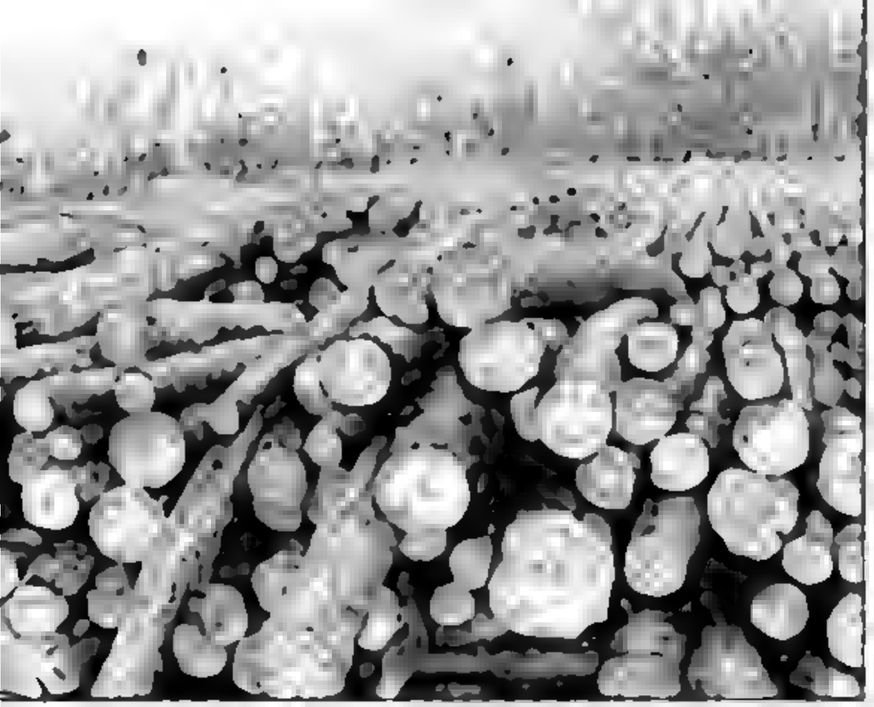
HIGHTIDE AND KAZUHIKO

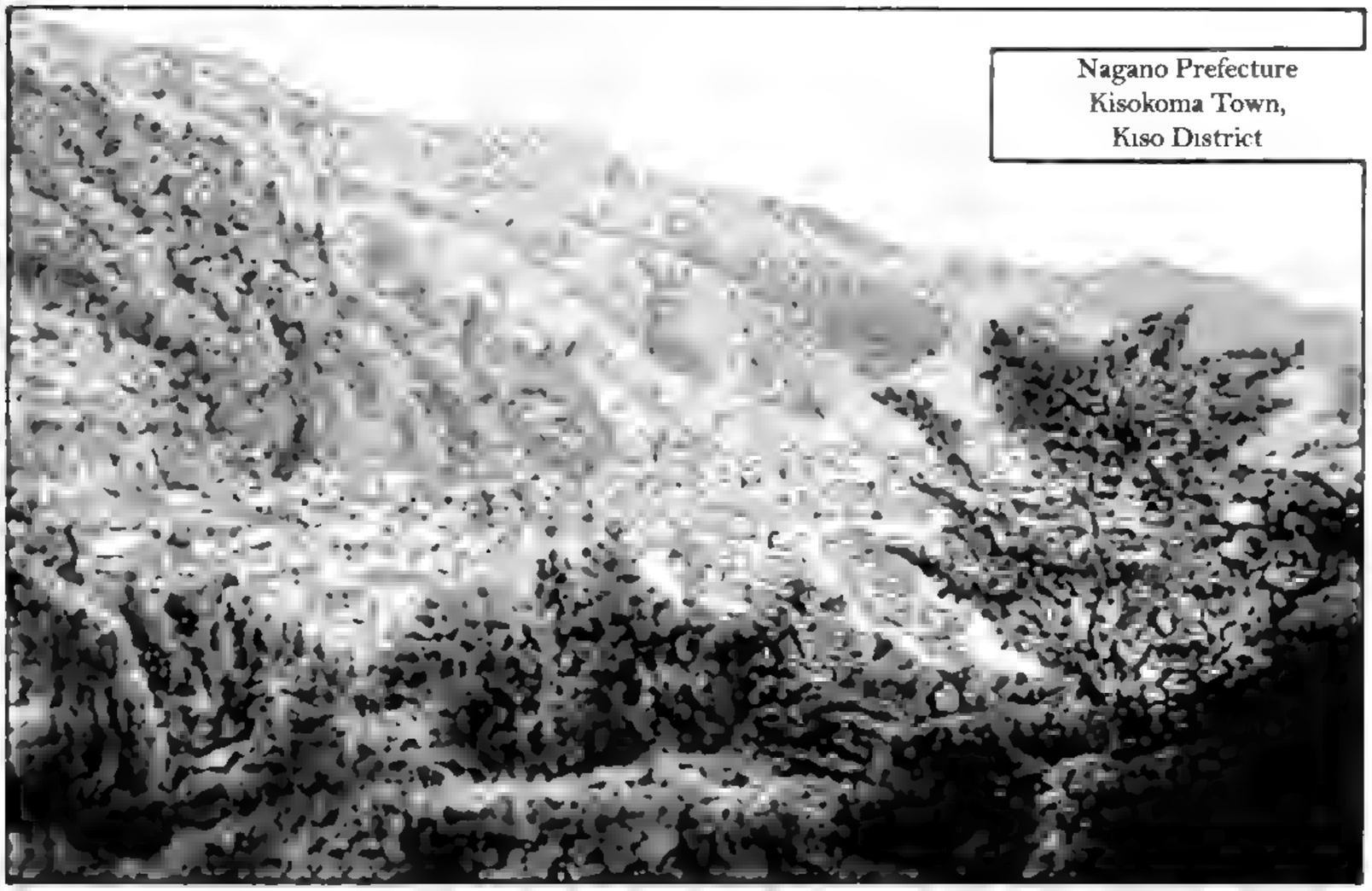
PROOFREADING BY

DESTORYERRING

CHAPTER 32:

GONGEN'S HORSE-RIDING GROUND




Nagano Prefecture
Kisokoma Town,
Kiso District

AOMO RANCH
TAKE A RIDE
ON A KISO HORSE!

It's a horse that's native to Japan, with a long body and short legs. Even if you fall, you won't hurt yourself much, Taki.

You won't fall off at all. They're very docile creatures.

These Kiso horses are so small and cute!

Take it slow, Suzuki.

I got it.

I'm off, Uncle!

There used to be thousands of these horses, but now they'll be on the verge of extinction without protection... That's just awful.

It's nothing. Letting more people know about the Kiso Horse is the whole reason I run this tourist ranch.

I'm sorry about my niece. We came here for fieldwork, but she's treating it like a field trip.

HONK HONK

Almost as awful as this business. Hahaha... Oh, you're going to "Kisokoma Gongen", aren't you? It's just that way. Let me show you.

What is it, Taiki?

Mr. Aono.

Normally I would've called his mother to come pick him up, but seeing that you're a single father...

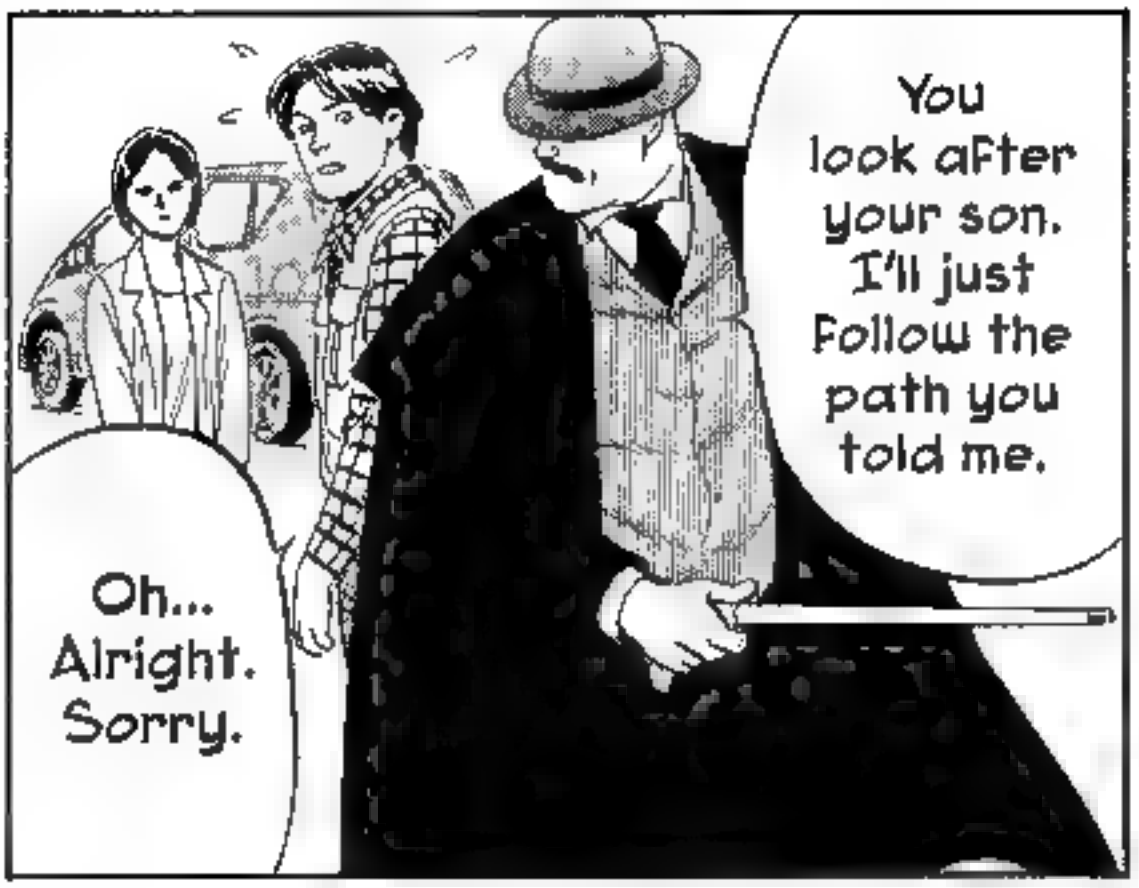
And you drove him all the way here, Miss Kayama?

He started feeling sick after lunch, so he went to the nurse's office...

6

Sorry for putting you through all this trouble.

Is he a visi-tor?


You look after your son. I'll just follow the path you told me.
Oh... Alright. Sorry.

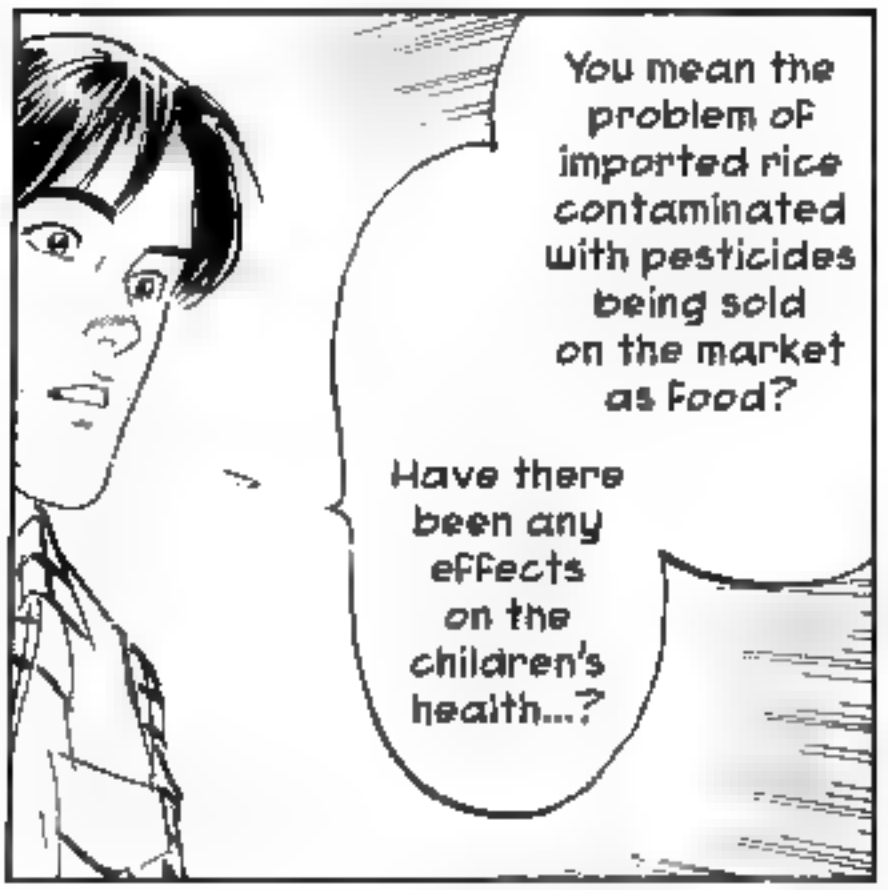
You look okay, Taiki.

He's a university professor that's been staying here for the past while. I think he's researching the history of iron or something...

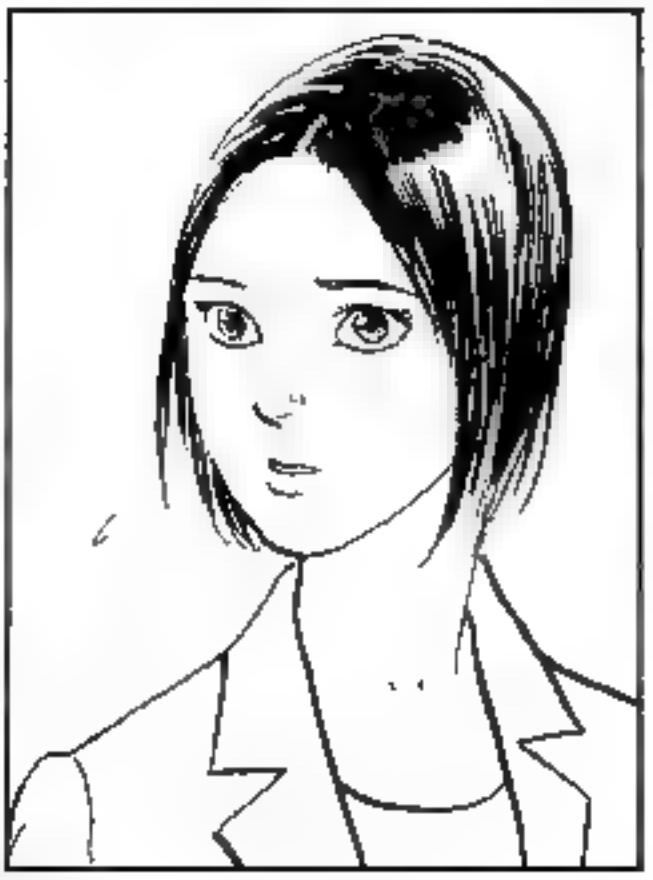
I'm a little worried about it, and I was afraid that this was the same thing.
Actually, it looks like the elementary school's been using "contaminated rice" in its lunches for a few years now.

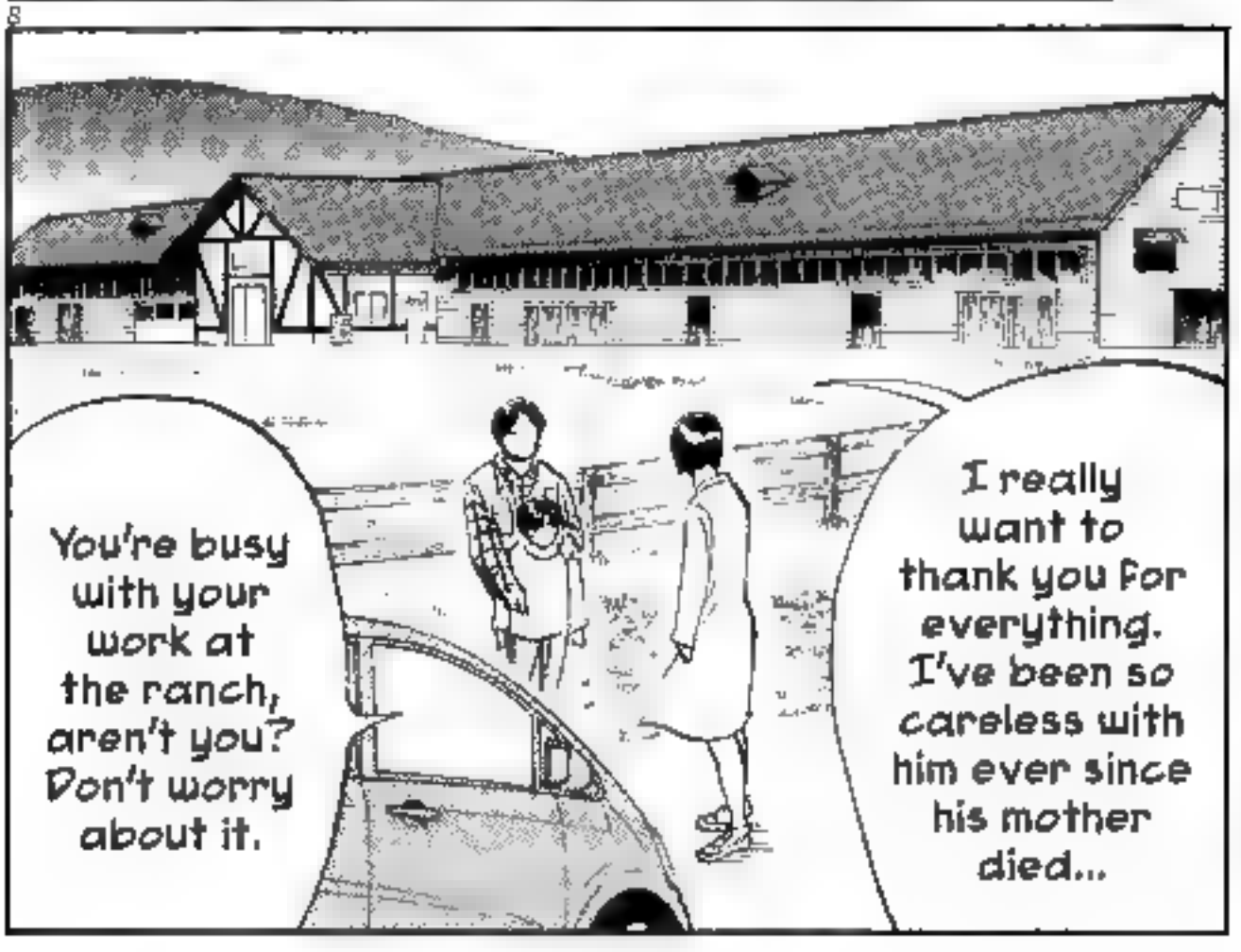
Good thing it was only tempo-rary.

No, the pesticides aren't really worth all that much concern.
What I'm really afraid of is...


You mean the problem of imported rice contaminated with pesticides being sold on the market as food?
Have there been any effects on the children's health...?

Well, it looks like this was no big deal, so don't worry.
I'd better get going now...




You're busy with your work at the ranch, aren't you? Don't worry about it.
I really want to thank you for everything. I've been so careless with him ever since his mother died...

Wait... Miss Kaya-ma!

We have cows here, so I can cook you something with fresh milk and butter
W...Why don't you come by for dinner some-time?

Hehehe... Hey, Chestnut!
Taiki, don't tell me you faked an illness to get the Miss Kayama the nurse here...

Oh...

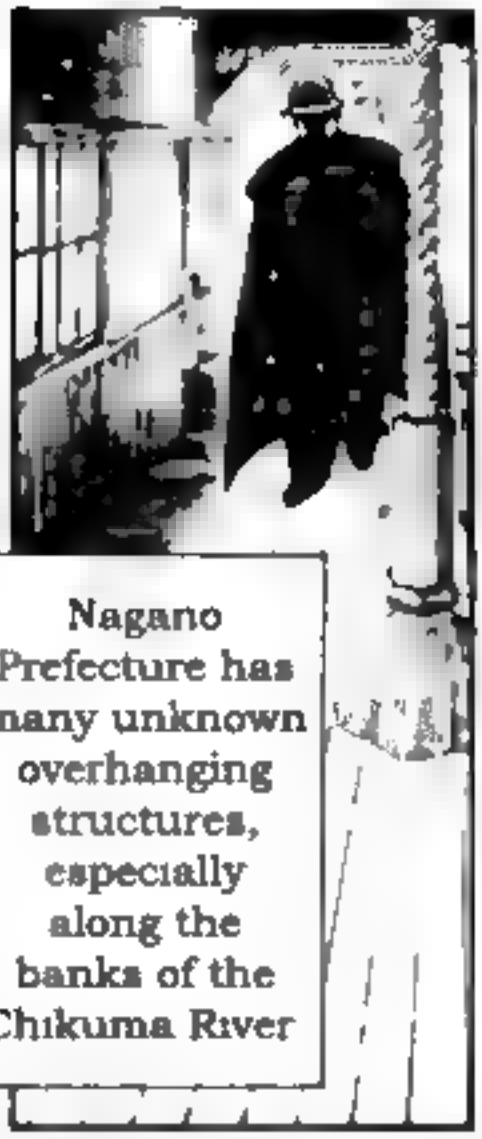
9

The "Over-hanging Structure", also known as the "Cliffside Struc ture"..

This refers to edifices built ingeniously on places with no footing, such as the side of a cliff.

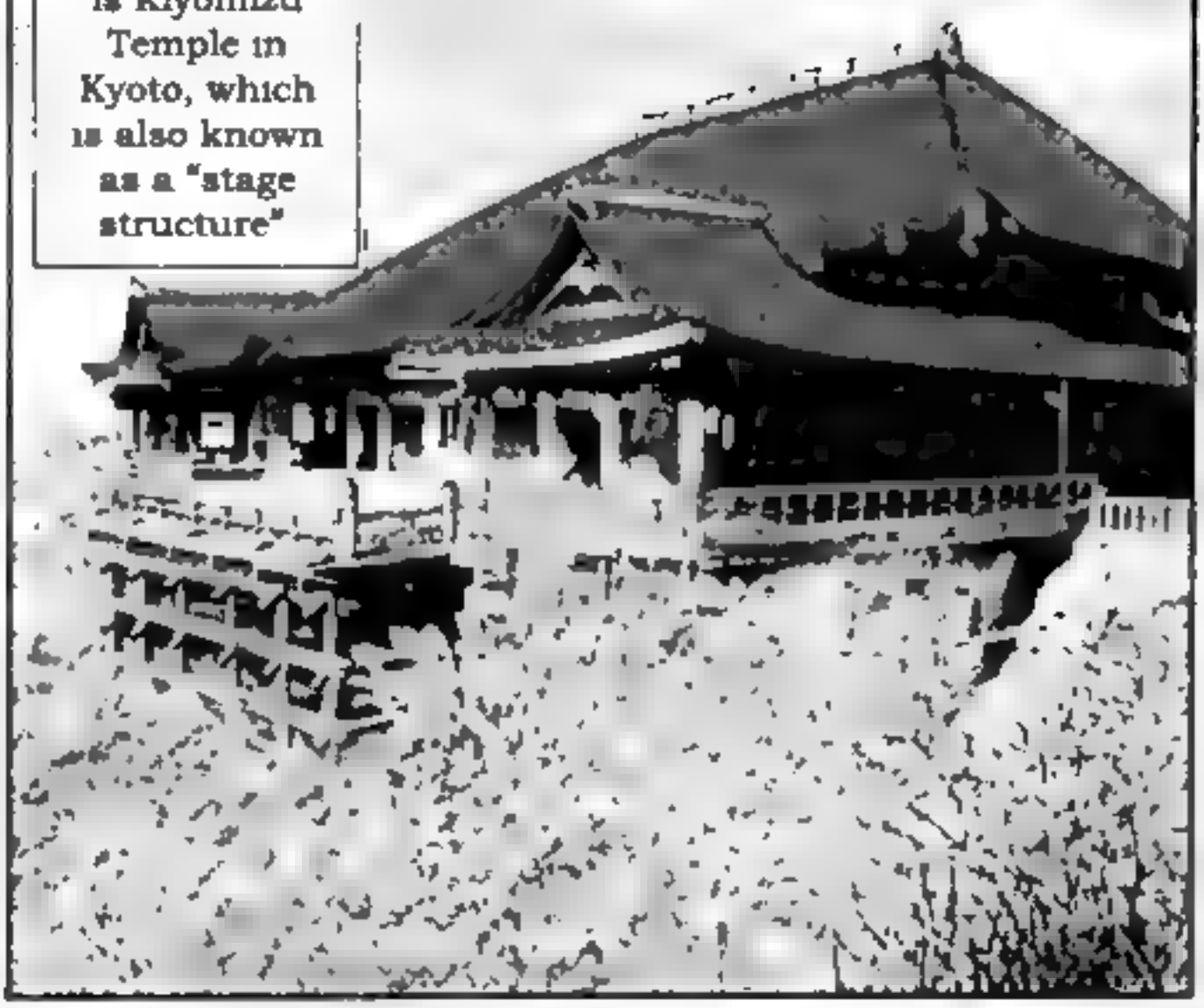
There are few cases of such structures overseas, but in Japan, they can be found anywhere from Tohoku to Kyushu.

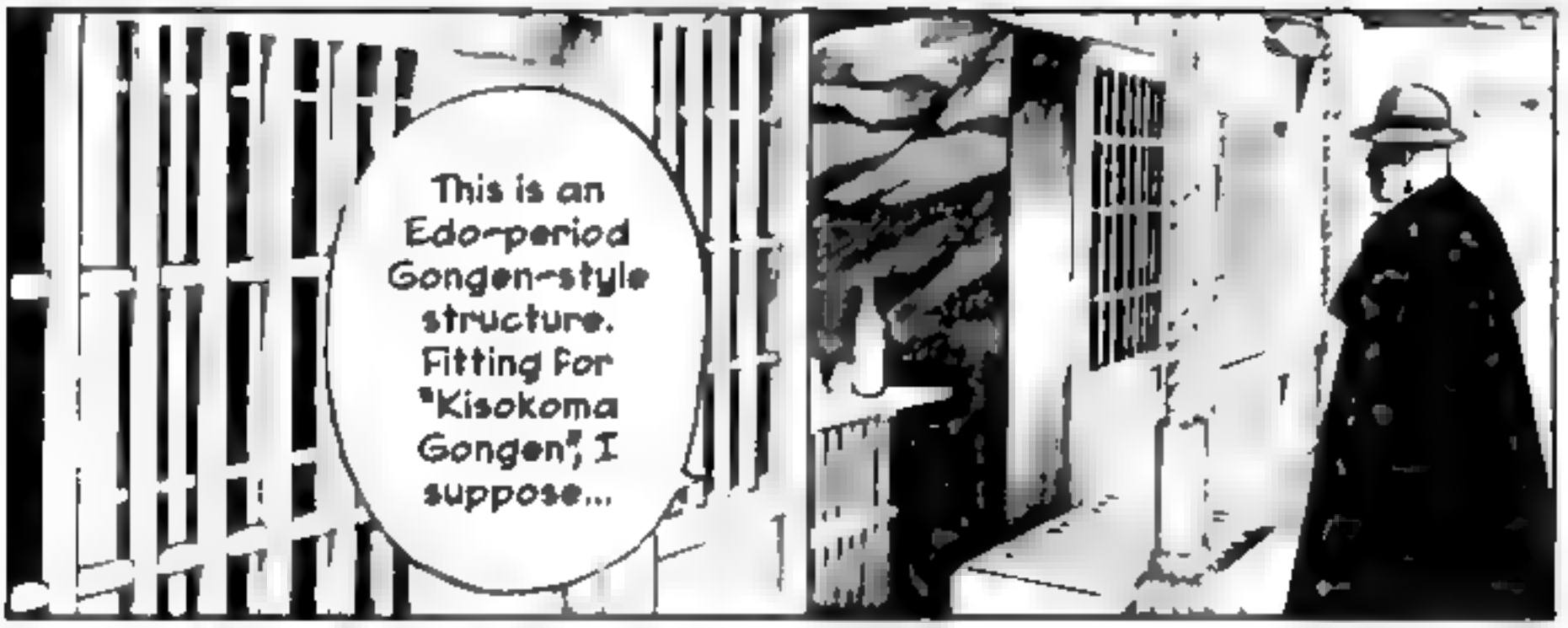
SIGN KISO GONGEN SHRINE



Nagano Prefecture has many unknown overhanging structures, especially along the banks of the Chikuma River

The most famous of these is Kiyomizu Temple in Kyoto, which is also known as a "stage structure"





...Are you the custodian of this shrine? Pardon my intrusion...

So, I see we have a visitor to this lonely shrine...

I'm Munakata. I'm studying Folkloristics.

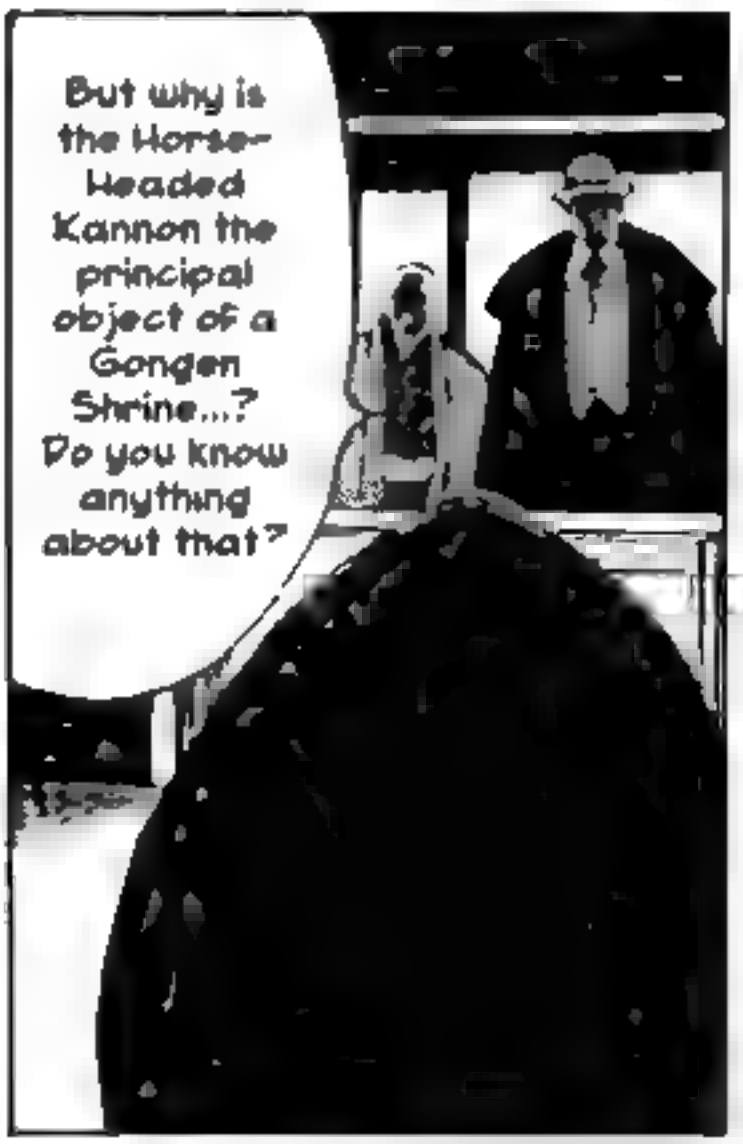
I'm Takahara Shinshu, and I live in the area.

No, I only followed you here because I'd never seen you before.

It's about that.

Well, that's perfect... There's something I'd like to ask you.

It looks like a statue of Kannon.
And a "Horse-Headed Kannon", too.


But why is the Horse-Headed Kannon the principal object of a Gongen Shrine...? Do you know anything about that?

It originally represented a Kannon that defeated evil with the power of a horse, but this image is largely unfamiliar to Japan, and it is commonly known as a tutelary deity of horses.

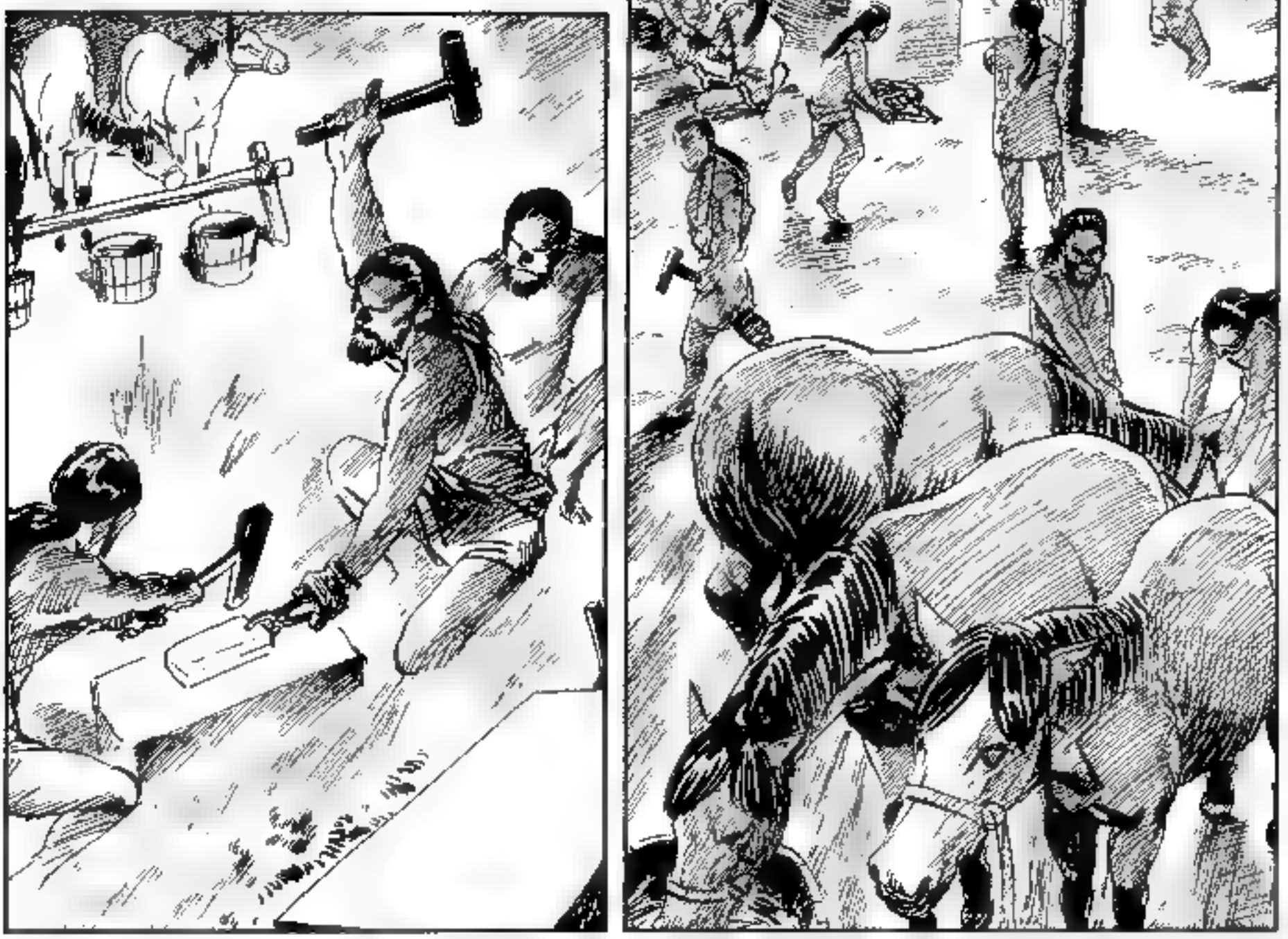
My guess is that this was originally a place of worship solely for the Horse-Headed Kannon.
No, I'm not sure...

But first of all, why would they place the Kannon in such a precarious location...?

Because it was possible for people who searched the layers and strata of caves and cliffs for ore deposits.

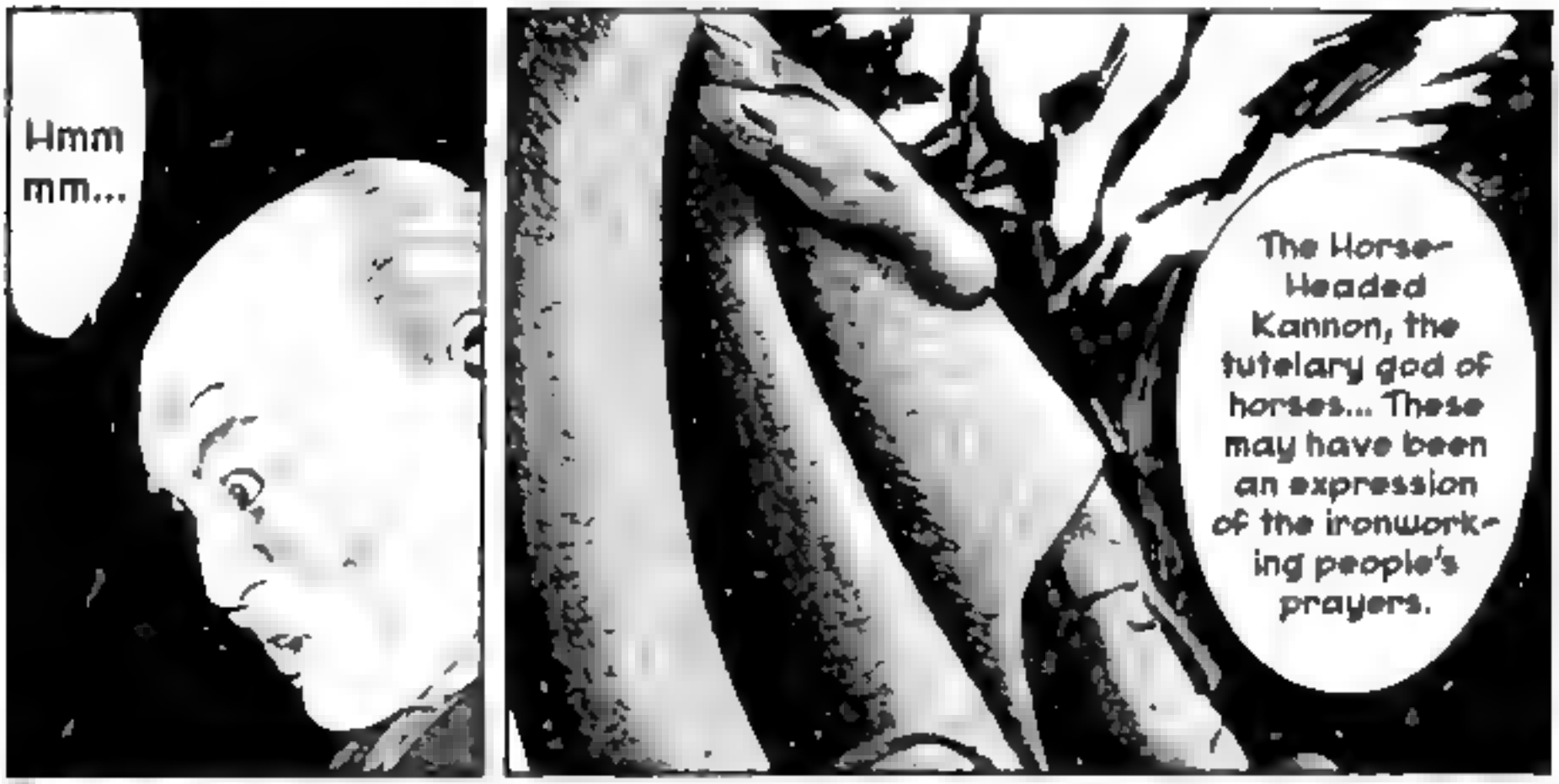
And sturdy-legged horses would have been indispensable for carrying heavy iron sand and tools from mountain to mountain.

Most common among these were the "ironworking people", who excavated iron sand and made iron products.

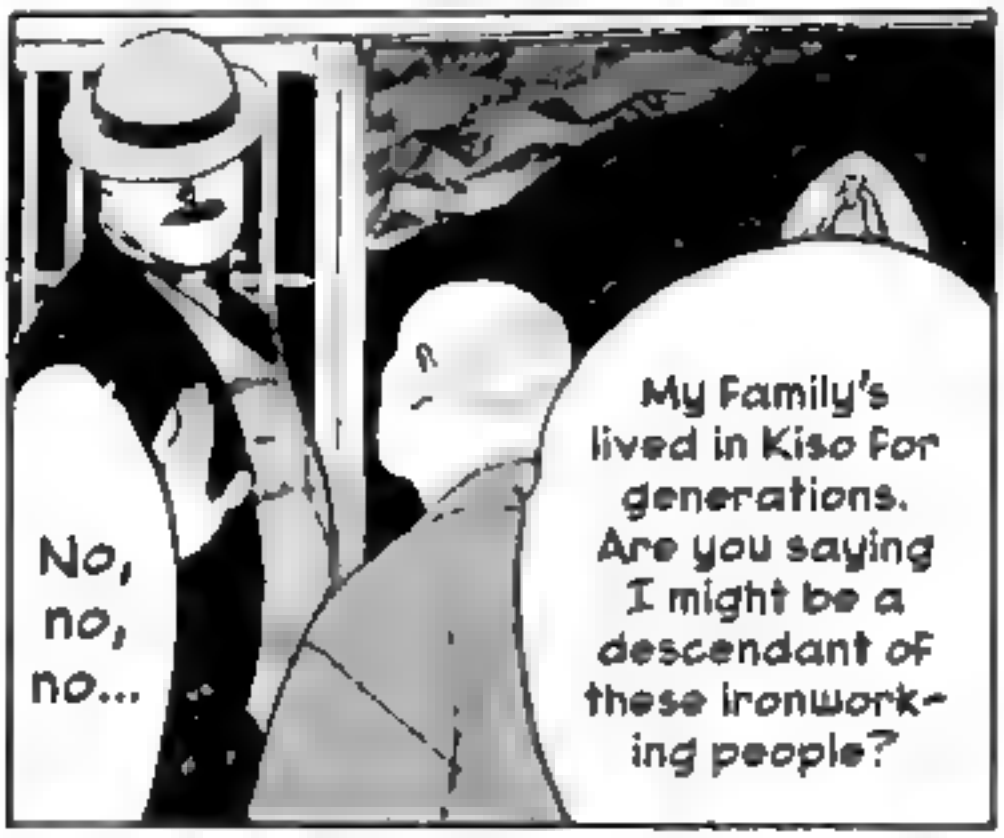


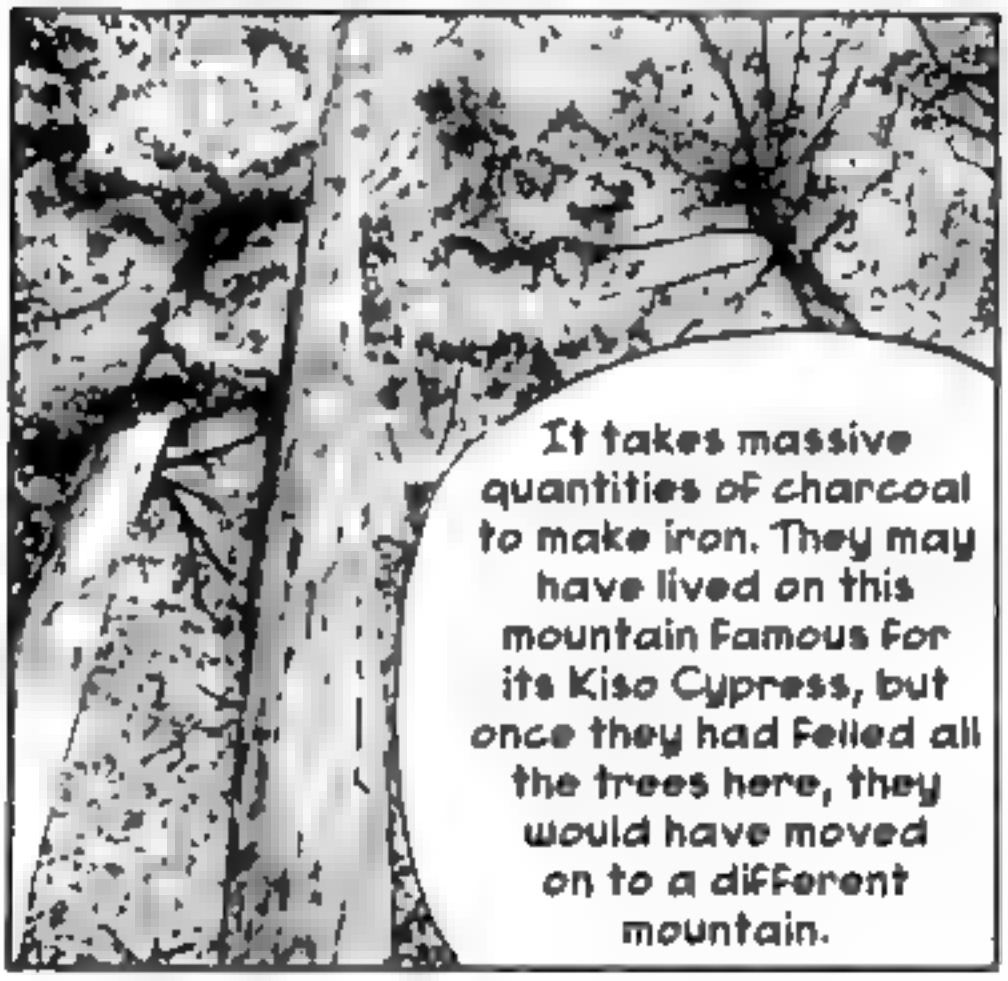
There are many cases where they find ruins of foundries nearby them.
There's a theory that these objects left behind on different cliffs became the prototype for the overhanging structures.

In fact, I just came from looking at a ruin that was discovered just the other day.


Hmm mm...
The Horse-Headed Kannon, the tutelary god of horses... These may have been an expression of the ironwork-ing people's prayers.

I see... So generations later people built a structure around the Kannon on the cliff, and made it an overhanging shrine?


No, no, no...
My family's lived in Kiso for generations. Are you saying I might be a descendant of these ironwork-ing people?


It takes massive quantities of charcoal to make iron. They may have lived on this mountain famous for its Kiso Cypress, but once they had felled all the trees here, they would have moved on to a different mountain.

Because of that, it became a land under the direct control of Lord Tokugawa Ieyasu, and later became a fief of the Owari Tokugawa.

I've heard that Kiso was a highly sought-after region in the Warring States period, for its cypress and Kiso horses.

Perhaps this became a Gongen-style structure at about the same time, and the Horse-Headed Kannon and Lord Gongen coexisted here?

Then they would've been unified under the Meiji's anti-Buddhist movement, and only the name Gongen Shrine remained...

Speaking of Lord Ieyasu, he was enshrined as Tosho Dai-gongen, and later came to be referred to as "Lord Gongen".

But still...

Oh, I don't hold a candle to a researcher like you...

I'm impressed. That's a brilliant explanation.

But why did Ieyasu, or Gongen, come to coincide and coexist with him...?

It would be natural for Faith in the Horse-Headed Kannon to continue in the homeland of Kiso horses...

Oh, crap!

Oh, dear

TELL THAT TO THE HORSE!

You really shouldn't go down to the swamp

...The grass has withered. So clearly, too...

It's round...

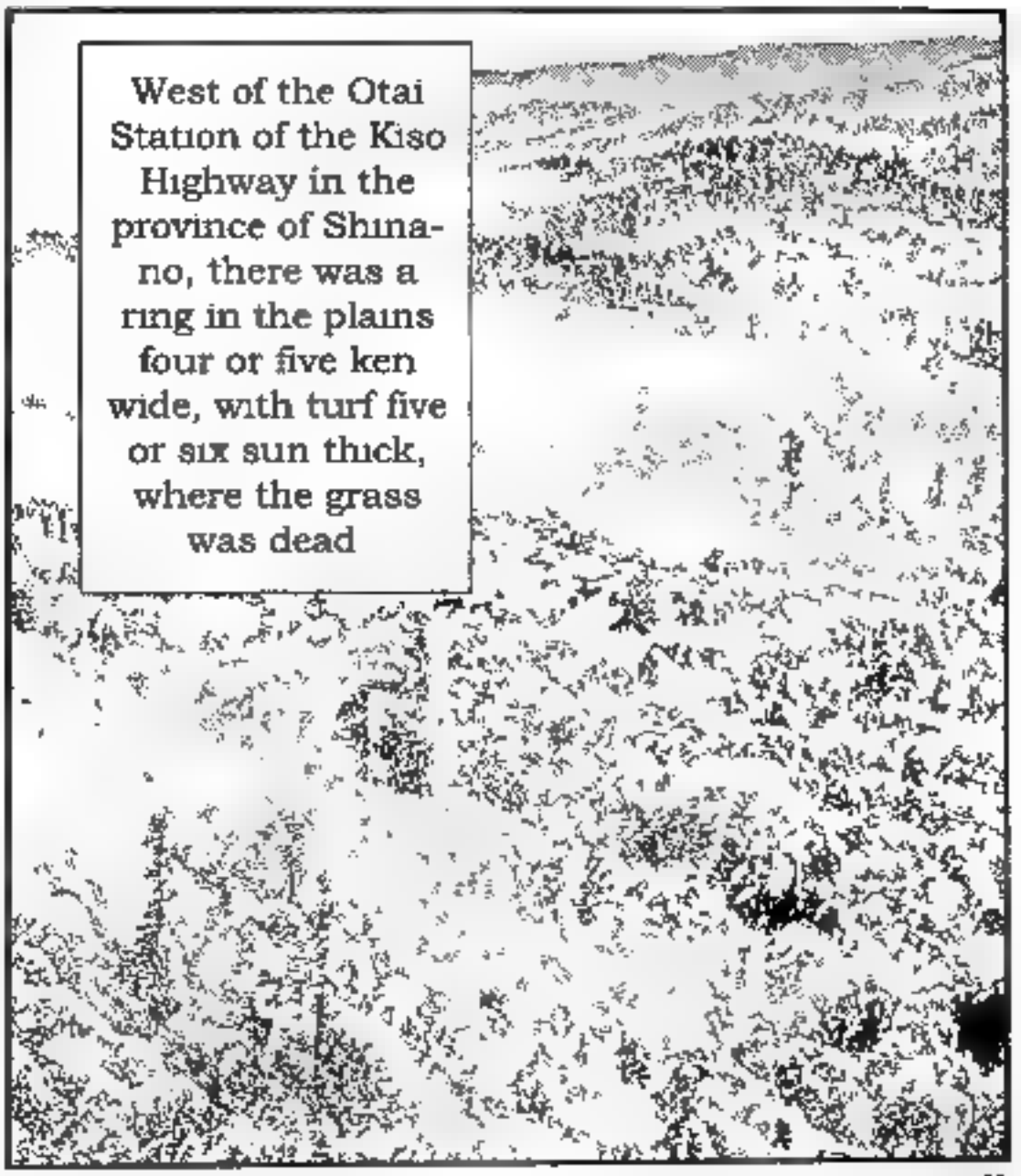
Almost like...

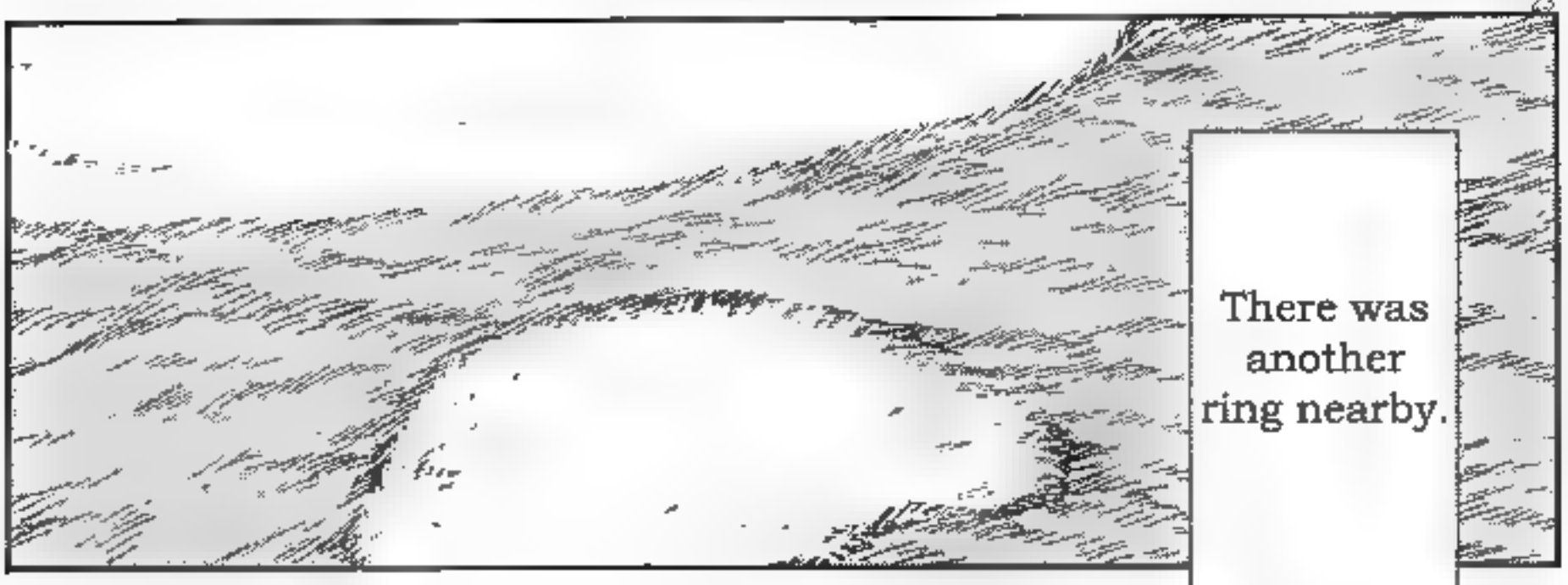
Almost like a mystery circle...!!

NEIGH!
WHINNY...
A... ARE YOU AL- RIGHT !?

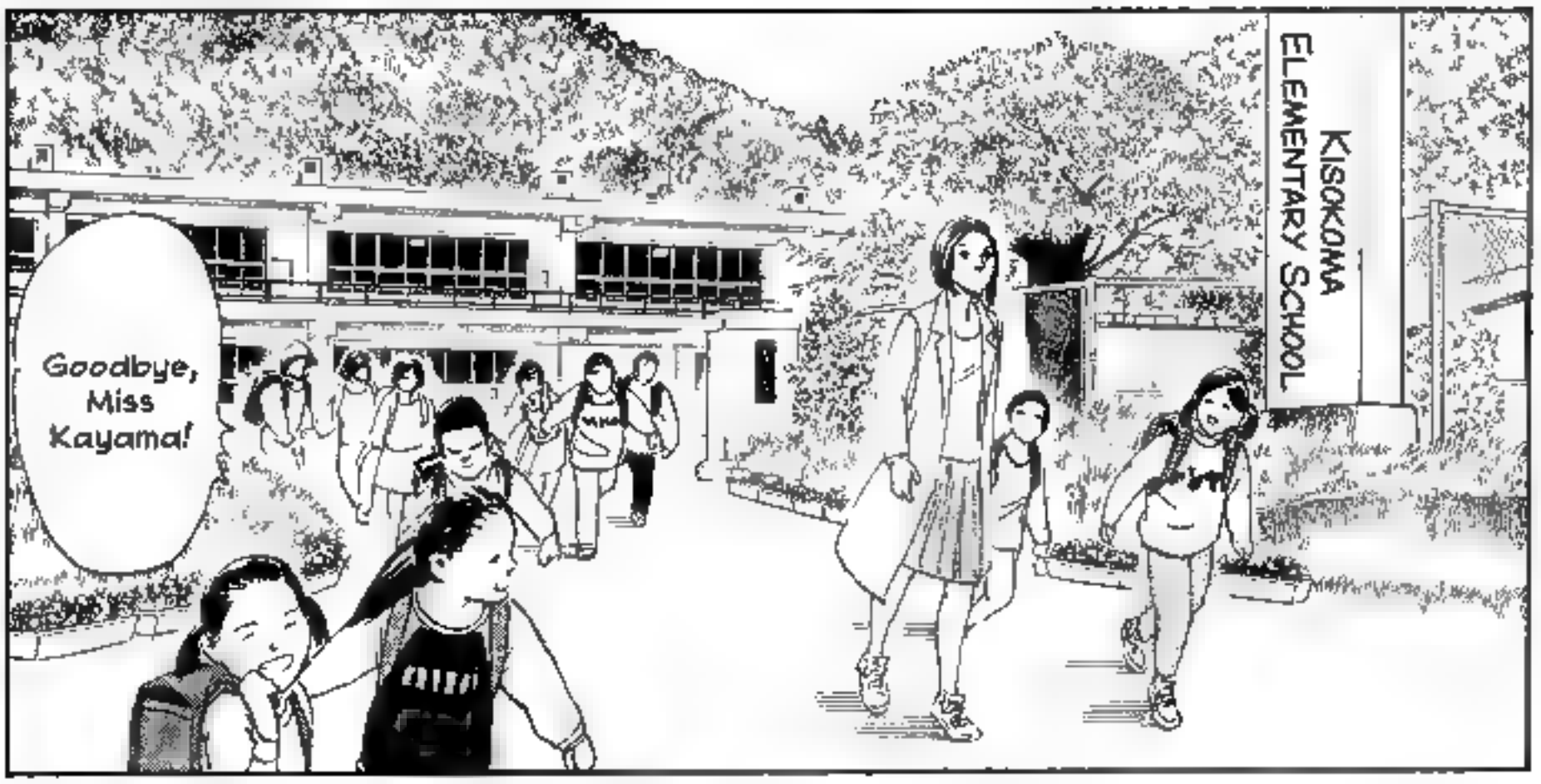
The essay collection "Shiojiri", written by Amano Sadakage, an Edo-period retainer of Owari, contains this record. .

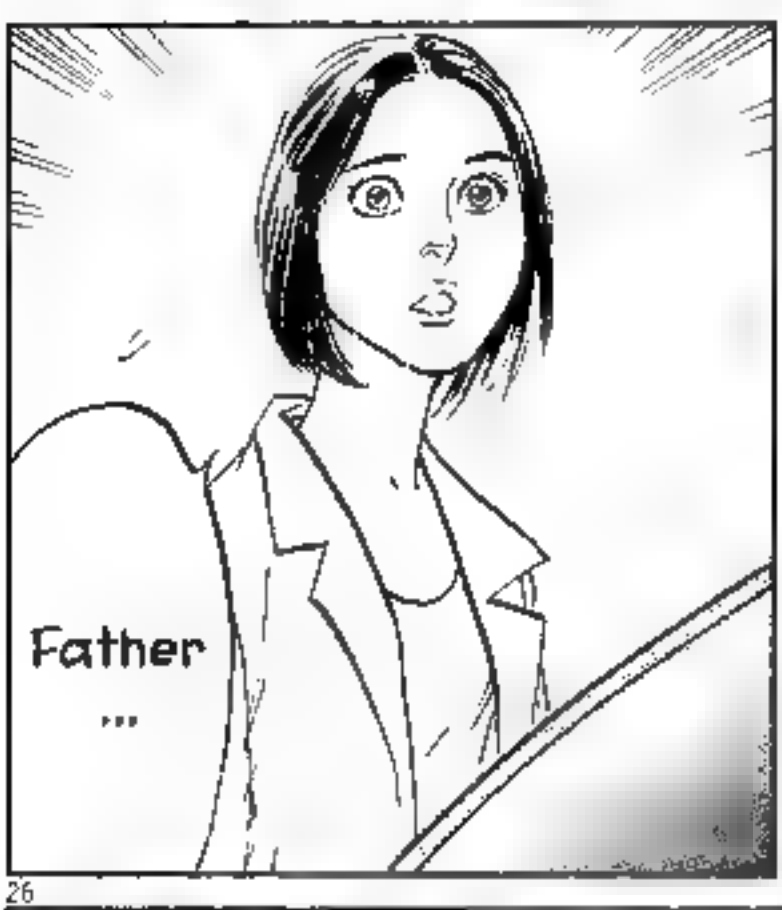
The locals call this the High-Moon Circle.

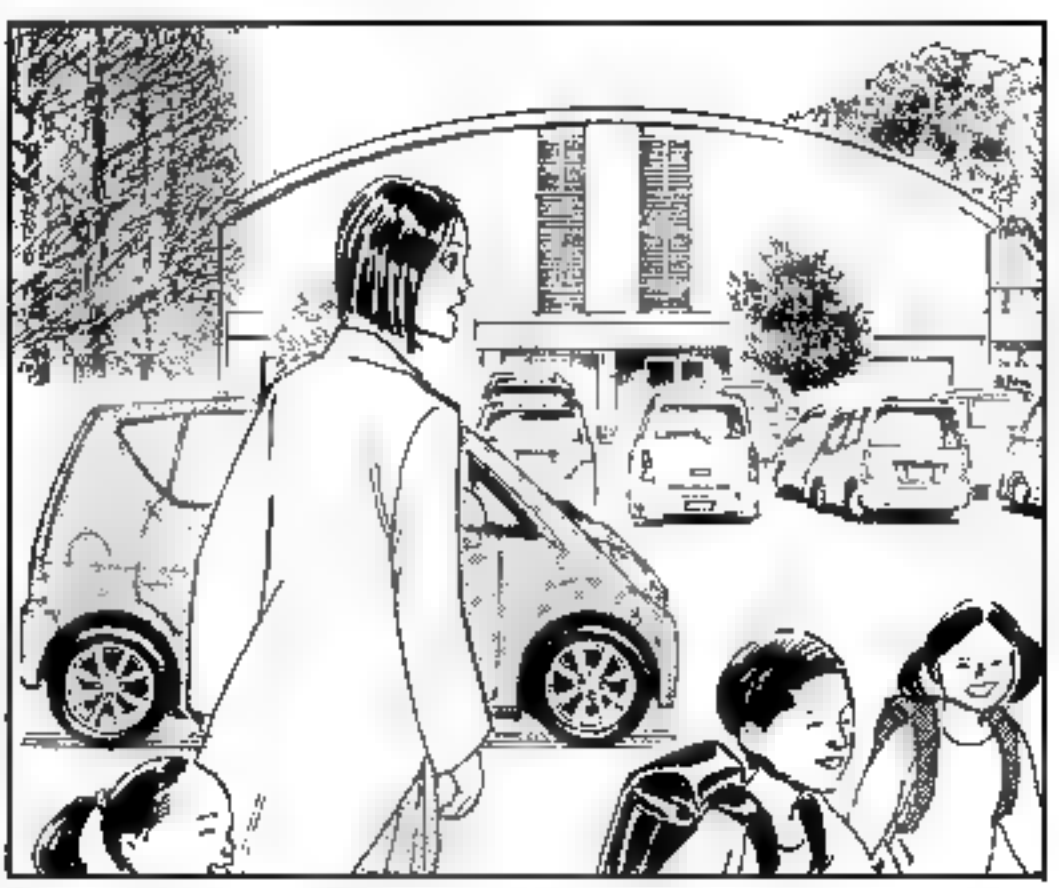

West of the Otai Station of the Kiso Highway in the province of Shina-no, there was a ring in the plains four or five ken wide, with turf five or six sun thick, where the grass was dead


There was another ring nearby.

The locals feared it, saying that any horse ridden into that ring will surely die.


Kisokoma Elementary School
Goodbye, Miss Kayama!


Father
...

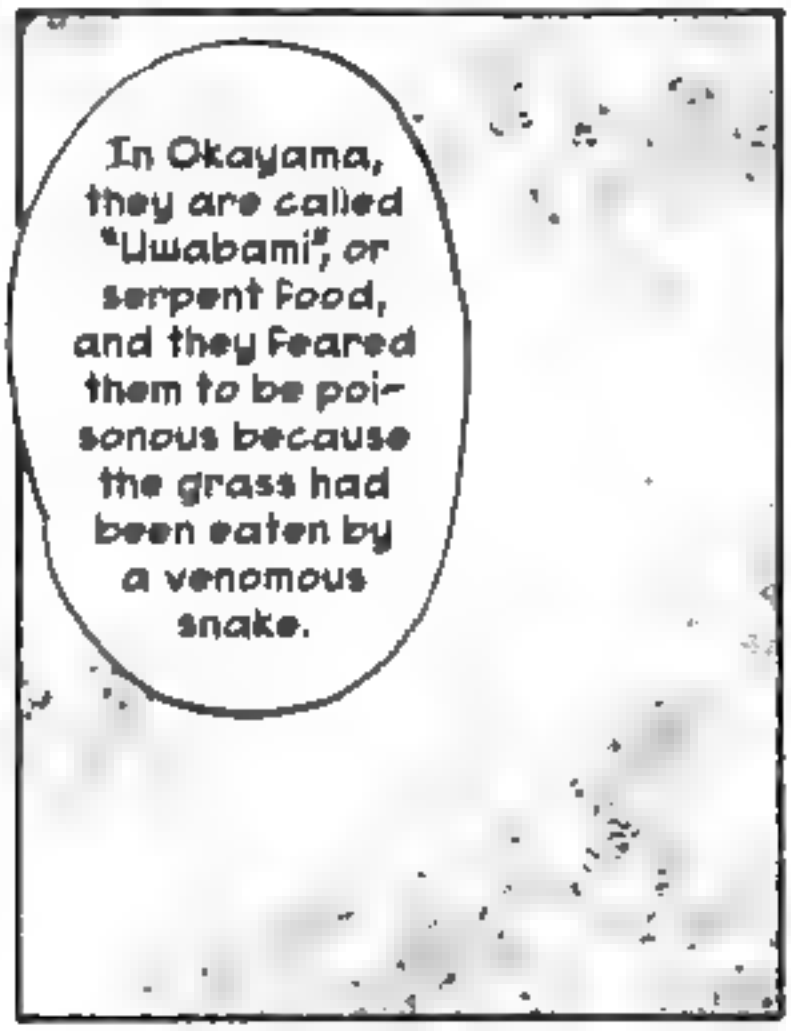


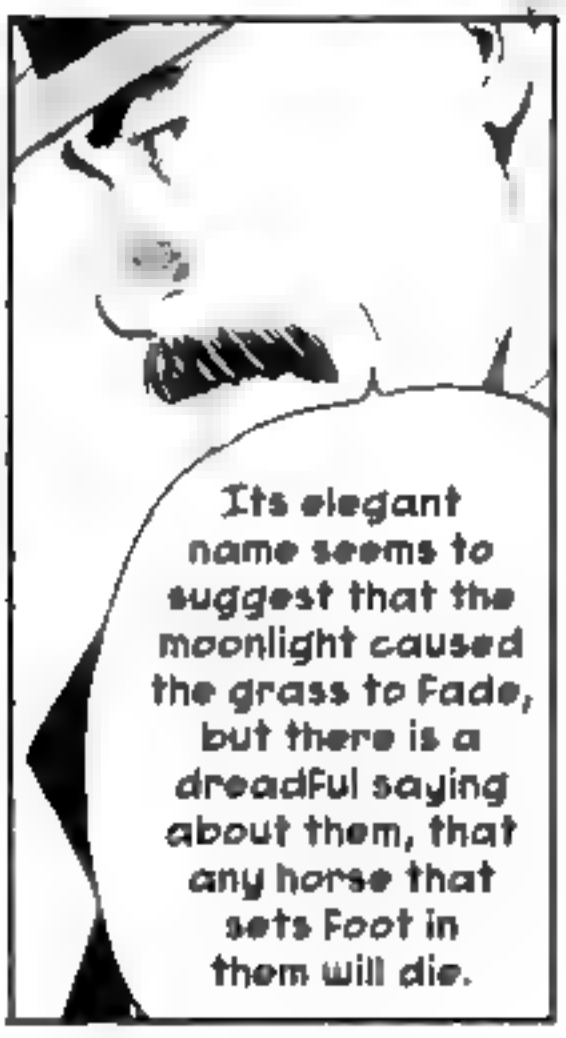
Perfect timing! I need to talk to you ...

I just happened to be passing by... How are you doing, Hazuki?

"High Moon Circles" ...

That's the Edo Period name for a phenomenon where a portion of the grass withers in a circle or a ring.


In Okayama, they are called "Uwabami", or serpent food, and they feared them to be poisonous because the grass had been eaten by a venomous snake.


Its elegant name seems to suggest that the moonlight caused the grass to fade, but there is a dreadful saying about them, that any horse that sets foot in them will die.

Others believe that they are the horse-riding grounds of the local Lord Gongen... the spirit of Tosho Daigongen Ieyasu, who rides his horse there night after night. Therefore, any ordinary horse that enters them is killed by a curse.

Y...You mean that legend came true...!?

I was so shocked... The horse isn't dead yet, but it was paralyzed and fell critically ill...

And a number of them have fallen ill in the past few days...

As a matter of fact, there have been other horses that wandered into those swamps while they were out grazing.

That means that there were horses that came near these circles before. They may all be exhibiting chronic symptoms.

MOLD !?

Taki, this turf has been ravaged by fungi... Mold, in other words

It's a kind of mold called Rhizoctonia. It begins reproducing from a simple point, like this

It causes the grass on the perimeter to wither, multiplying in a circular direction.

Until it eventually creates a circular spot over 10 meters in diameter

But Rhizoctonia is fairly common in the soil, and is hardly harmful to horses.

Perhaps the horses may have eaten grass contaminated with this mold.

Is that the cause of horses dying in the High Moon Circles...!?

Then what is the cause—?

You don't have to get worked up about it... Isn't this a little outside your field?

There was another ring nearby

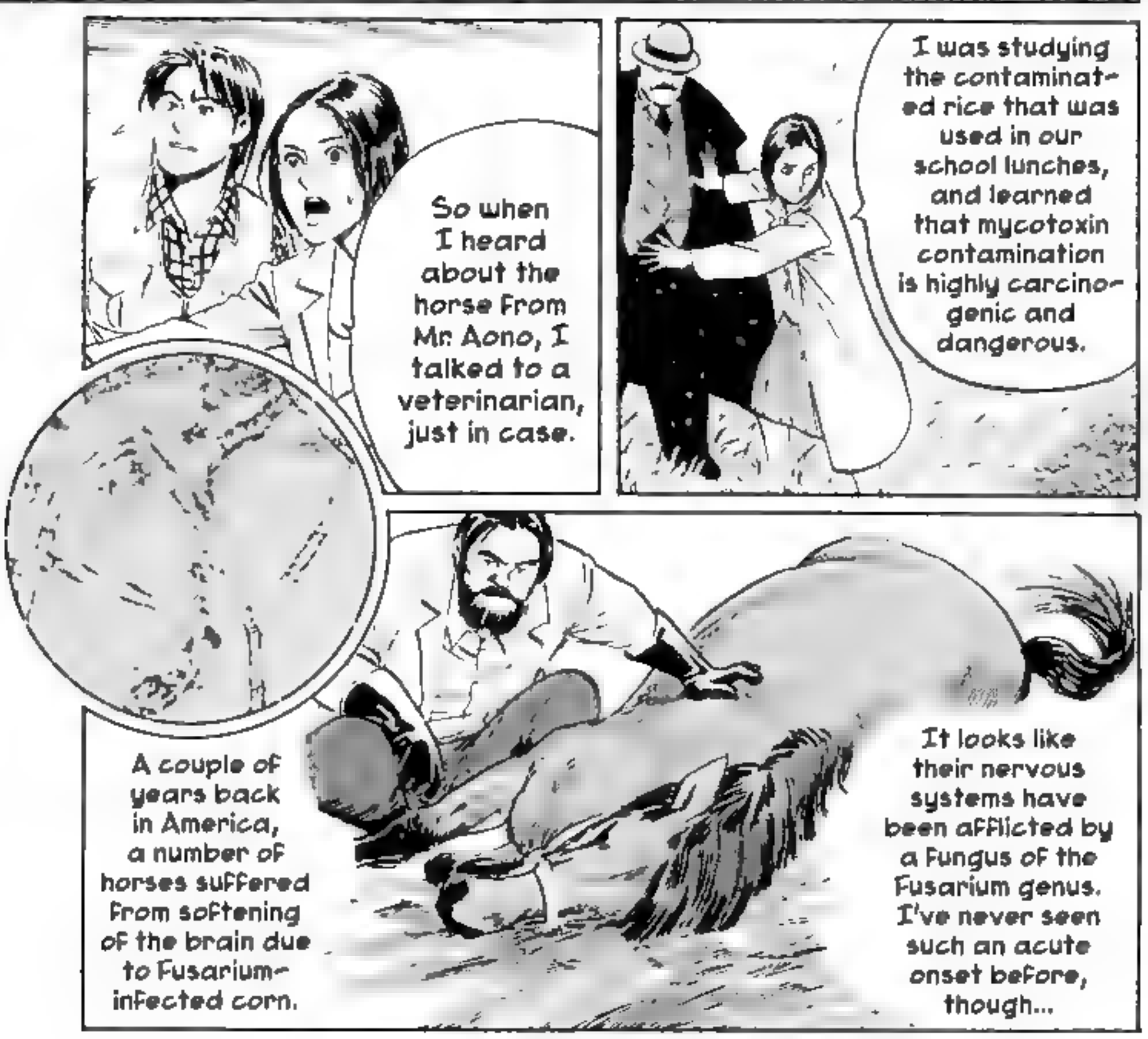
Any horse ridden into that ring will surely die

This looks like another circle, but it has a warped shape... I can hardly even call it a circle

GET AWAY FROM THAT!

Perhaps the shape is different because the fungus reproduces in a different way.

In other words, it's not Rhizoctonia...!!

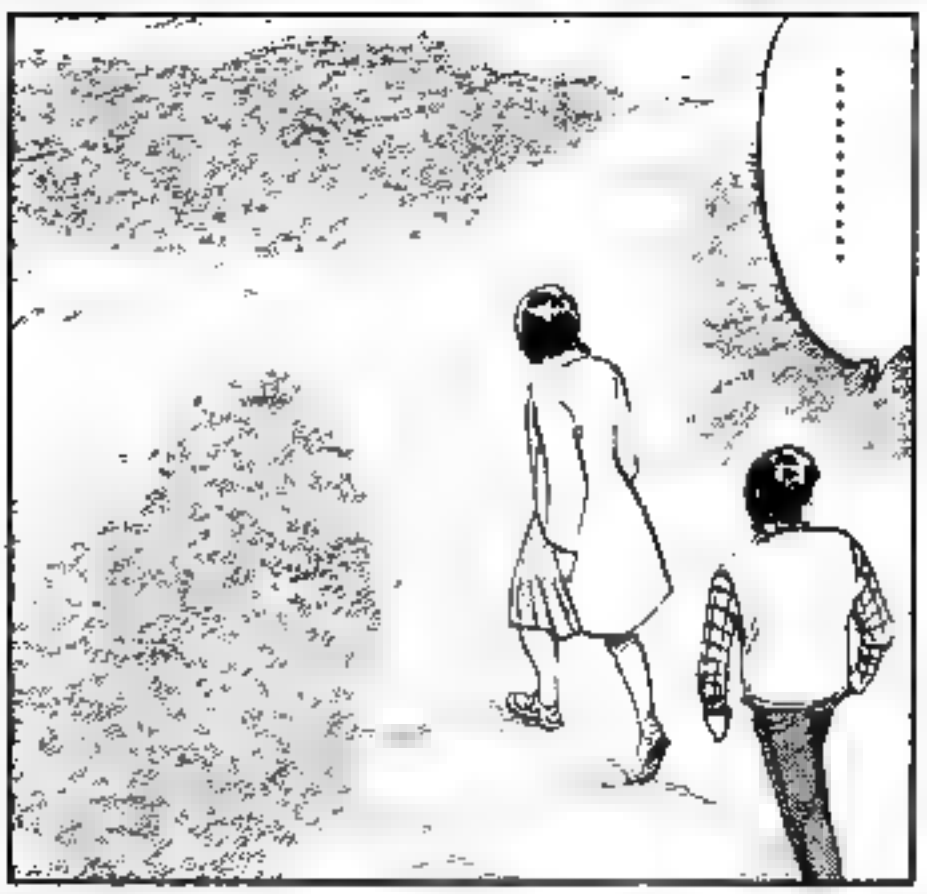

So when I heard about the horse from Mr. Aono, I talked to a veterinarian, just in case.
I was studying the contaminated rice that was used in our school lunches, and learned that mycotoxin contamination is highly carcinogenic and dangerous.
A couple of years back in America, a number of horses suffered from softening of the brain due to Fusarium-infected corn.
It looks like their nervous systems have been afflicted by a fungus of the Fusarium genus. I've never seen such an acute onset before, though...

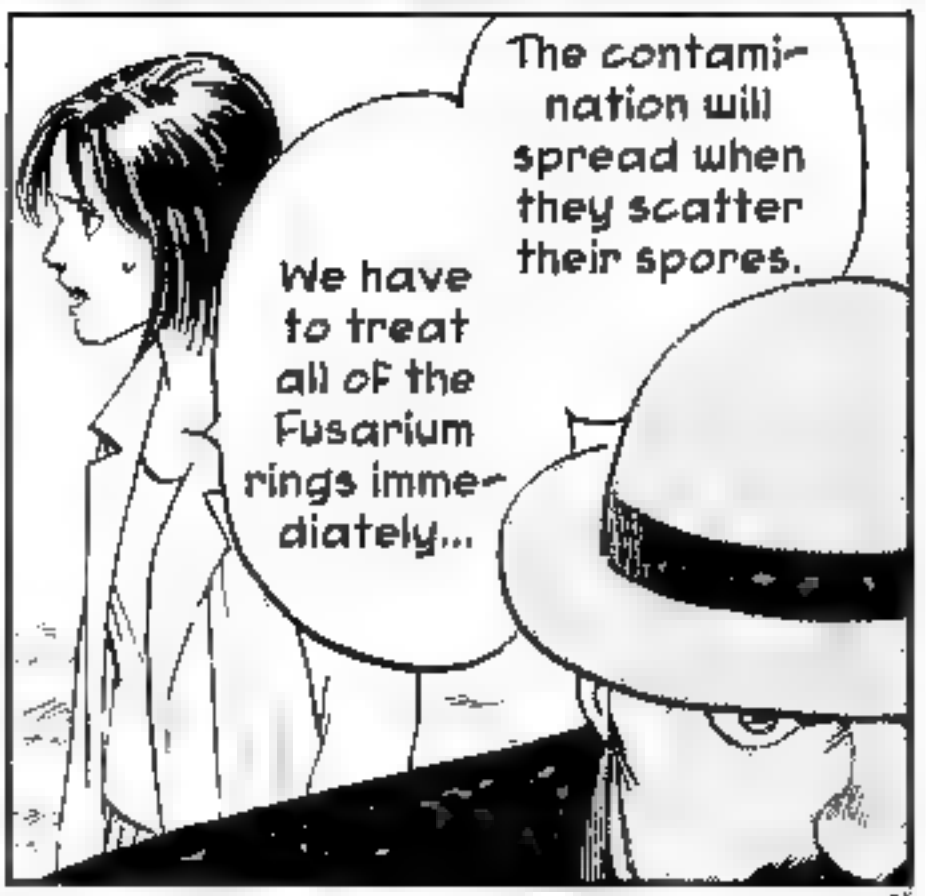
And this unknown mold may be even more dangerous.

They say it can induce esophageal cancer in humans.

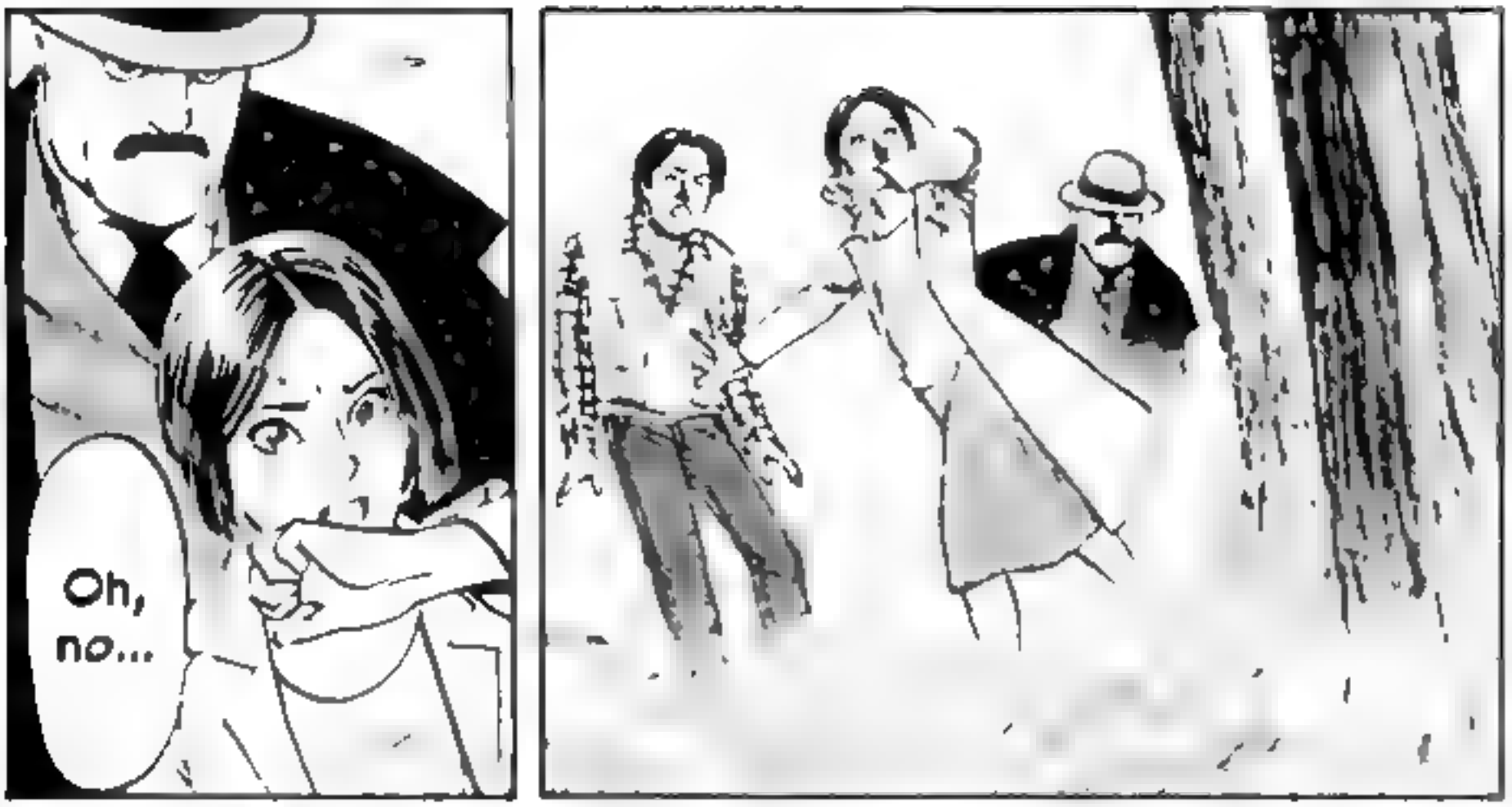
There may have been horses that got sick and died after entering it, just like the legend suggested.

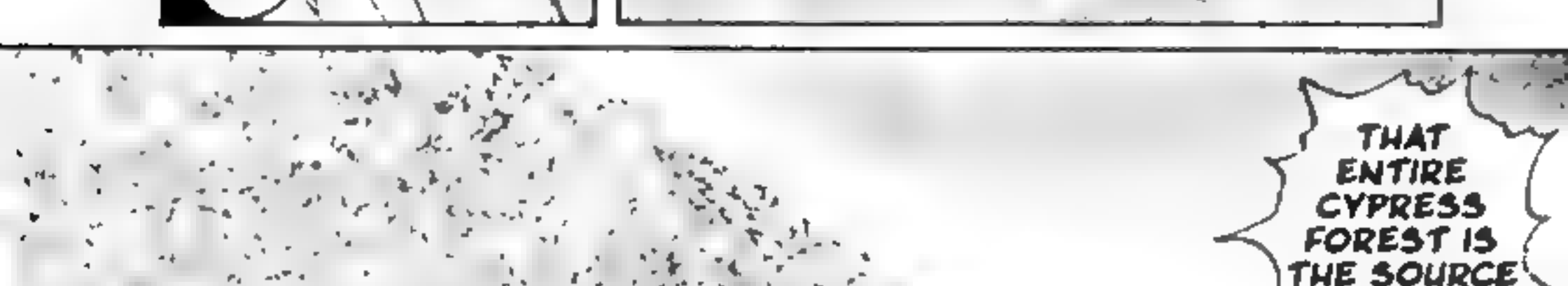
So the type that withers grass in a circle is harmless, but the type that withers it in a warped shape is this Fusarium mold, and it can be harmful to animals...




The contamination will spread when they scatter their spores.
We have to treat all of the Fusarium rings immediately...

!


Oh, no...


THAT ENTIRE CYPRESS FOREST IS THE SOURCE OF THE CONTAM-INATION...!!

No, not on that scale!
Can we treat it with a drug?

MR. TAKA-HARA ...!?

40

Mr. Takahara is a wealthy man that owns a number of these moun-tains

Land-owner -

He has his head so high above the clouds they gave him the nickname "Lord Gongen".

These mountains have forests of valuable cypress. Who knows how many billion yen they're worth

I didn't mean for you to burn down your precious forest...

I'm sorry, Father I didn't think it had spread so far

Lord Gongen

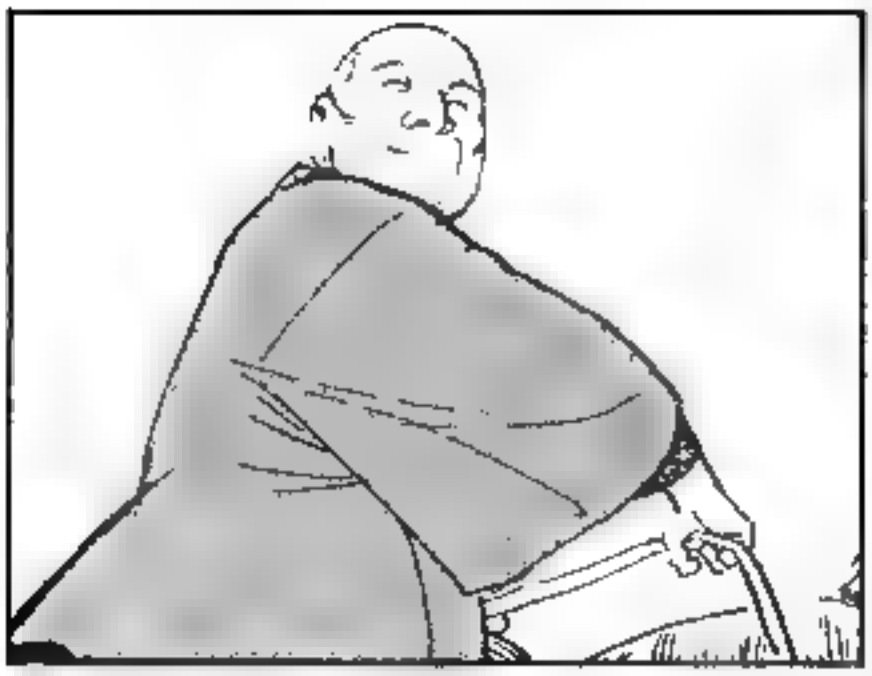
HAH HAH HAH —

Iron-working people

Don't mention it. Let's just say that the ancient ironworking people burned it down to make iron.

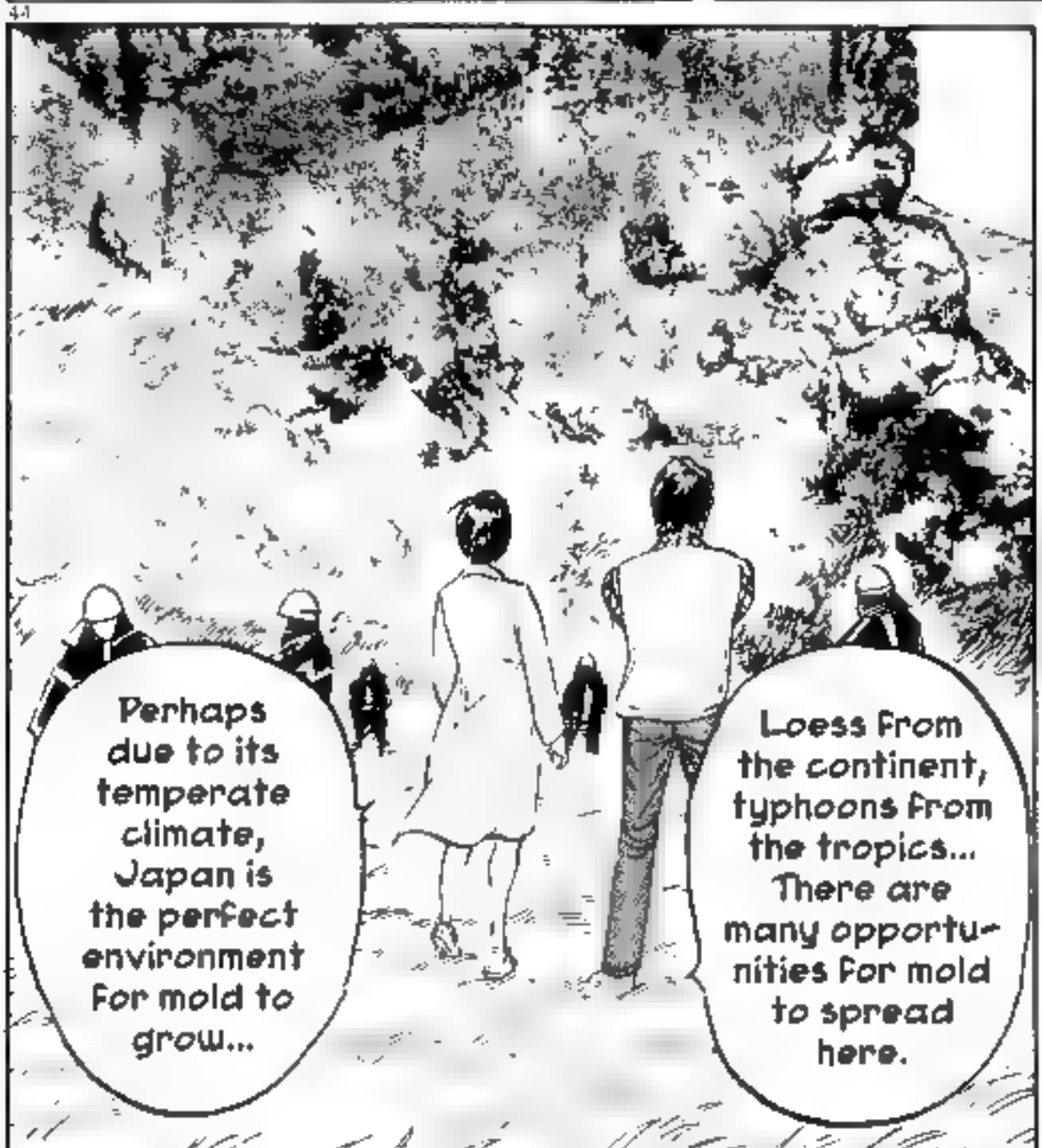
People may have believed it to be a curse for defiling Lord Gongen's horse riding grounds, so they built a Gongen Shrine to supplicate him

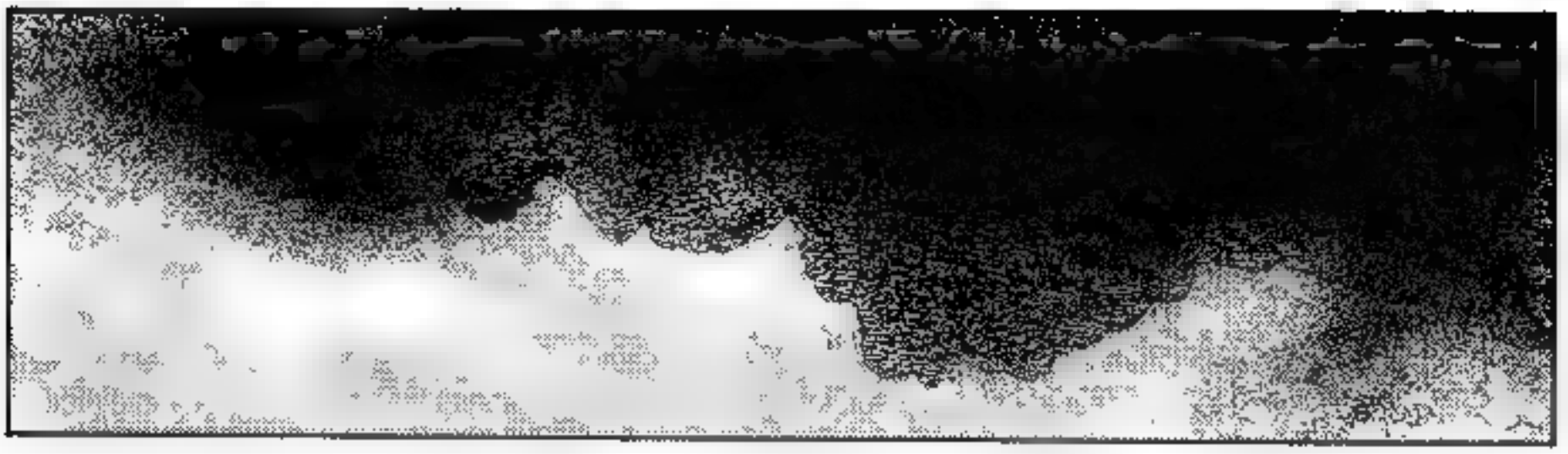
Even after the ironworking people left, leaving the Horse Headed Kannon behind, there would be no end to the horses that died to the poisonous rings.

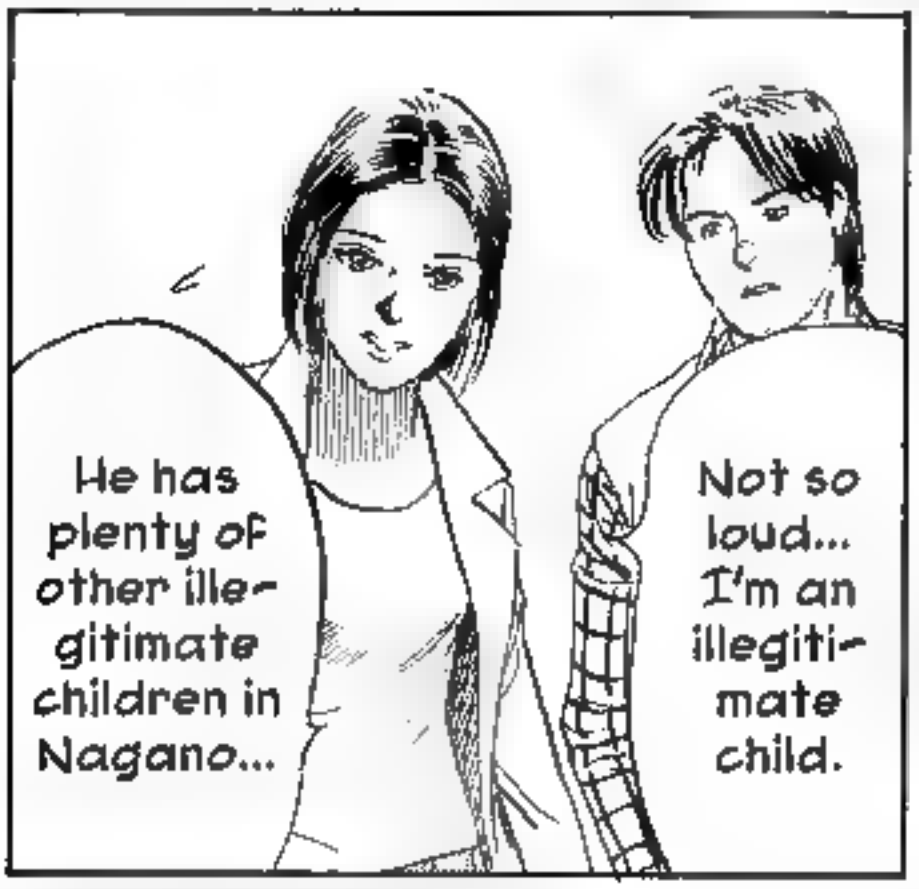


And that was the over-hanging Kisokoma Gongen.

4-1


Perhaps due to its temperate climate, Japan is the perfect environment for mold to grow...
Loess from the continent, typhoons from the tropics... There are many opportunities for mold to spread here.




He has plenty of other illegitimate children in Nagano...
Not so loud... I'm an illegitimate child.

Still, I never would've thought you were Mr. Takahara's daughter, Miss Kashima...

I appreciate the thought, but I'd rather you didn't.

So, you're the bastard child of a noble! He really is Lord Gongen!

I'll ask him to support your ranch in some way, Mr. Aono.

I promised my late wife and Taiki that I'd fight to the bitter end.

I quit my white-collar job to start this ranch. It may be hard making ends meet, but I'll never beg for money!

Do you mind taking me to the ranch?

WE NEED TO BORE A TUNNEL THROUGH YOUR MOUN-TAIN, AS PART OF OUR PLAN TO BUILD A MAGLEV LINE THROUGH NAGANO!

...CAN YOU PLEASE AT LEAST HEAR US OUT, MR. TAKA-HARA?

ENOUGH! I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THIS MAGLEV, BUT IT SCATTERS ELECTRO-MAGNETIC WAVES AS IT RUNS, DOESN'T IT?

I WON'T LET ANY MOLD OR ELECTRO-MAGNETIC RADIATION NEAR IT!!
MY MOUN-TAINS HAVE A SCHOOL FOR CHIL-DREN, AND A RANCH FOR KISO HORSES!

The Case Records of Professor Munakata – Collection 10 END

これらの作品はフィクションです。
実在の団体・人物・事件などには
一切関係ありません。

◎初出一覧◎

巨木漂流
『ビッグコミック』2008年3月10日号、3月25日号、4月10日号

◈

ちいさきものの手
『ビッグコミック』2008年9月10日号

◈

女帝陛下の百合若大臣
『ビッグコミック』2008年9月25日号、10月10日号、10月25日号

◈

権現の馬場
『ビッグコミック』2008年11月10日号、11月25日号

◎参考資料・協力◎

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『海と列島文化 別巻 漂流と漂着・総索引』（小学館）／『氷に刻まれた地球11万年の記憶』リチャード・B・アレイ著（ヴィレッジブックス）
『西暦535年の大噴火』デイヴィッド・キーズ著（文藝春秋）／『古代出雲大社の復元（増補版）』大林組プロジェクトチーム編（学生社）
『よみがえる古代　大建設時代』大林組プロジェクトチーム編（東京書籍）／『発掘された日本列島 2007 新発見考古速報』（朝日新聞社）
『ビジュアル神社総覧　全国一の宮めぐり』藤田晴一・著（学習研究社）／『えのとす 第29号』（新日本教育図書株式会社）

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THE CASE BOOKS OF PROFESSOR MUNAKATA

CHAPTER 32

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